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The Credibility and Morality of
the Four Gospels.



REPORT OF THE
FIVE NIGHTS' DISCUSSION,
AT HALIFAX, BETWEEN
THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS,
BAPTIST MINISTER, AND
ICONOCLAST.





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THE CREDIBILITY AND MORALITY OF THE
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P R E F A C E.

DEAR READER,

Do not imagine that in the following pages you have an examination or elucidation of the whole bearings of the question debated between myself and the Rev. T. D. Matthias. In five nights, we have only partially examined the four gospels. Many other objections might and shall be raised as I have the opportunity. It does not become me to boast in any way of a triumph; you, after reading what is said by my opponent, and the words in which I uttered my own thoughts, will best judge on which side the advantage lies. In discussion, thought clashes with thought, brain power permeates brain, giving birth to better and more distinct thinkings on either side; and, as the "ego" grasps each fact more closely and comprehends it more clearly, so shall we all arrive more nearly to the truth. In a few weeks, this subject will be again debated in Scotland, when I trust to do more ample service to the cause of humanity, by more fully exposing what I conceive to be the many inconsistencies, incoherencies, and immoralities contained in the Christian system. I

iv.

only trust that in each case I may meet an opponent as earnest and defiant in the enunciation of his sentiments as was the Rev. T. D. Matthias. The few unkind words he allowed to escape him were most amply and honourably withdrawn in his last speech, and the freedom of thought encouraged in some of his speeches is worthy of the highest commendation.

To you, dear Reader, I say—Believe neither side until you have carefully examined both.

ICONOCLAST.

Sheffield, January 15, 1860.

ERRATA.

Page 18, line 16 from bottom, for "by," read "my."

Page 81, line 18, for "Lazarus," read twice "the rich man."

Page 91, 12 lines from bottom, for "Chrysostone," read "Chrysostom." 4 lines from bottom, for "Lahbæus," read "Labbæus."

FIVE NIGHTS' DISCUSSION.

THE CREDIBILITY AND MORALITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31st, 1859.

PROPOSITION.

"THE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST AS NARRATED IN THE
FOUR GOSPELS, INCREDIBLE.

Mr. JOSEPH JENNINGS, in taking the chair, said, Ladies and gentlemen, at the request of the committee I have consented to preside at the two first meetings. I have had no part in the getting up of this discussion. I believe you are aware most of you that it arose out of a lecture given by Iconoclast some weeks ago, in this place. The following are the regulations drawn up by the committee, which I trust will be strictly observed by all parties.

ICONOCLAST UNDERTAKES TO PROVE AFFIRMATIVE OF THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITIONS; THE REV. THOS. D. MATTHIAS UNDERTAKES TO PROVE THE OPPOSITE.

PROPOSITIONS.

1. The History of Jesus Christ as narrated in the Four Gospels, incredible.
2. The doctrines of Jesus Christ not calculated to benefit humanity.

REGULATIONS.

1. The discussion to be in the Odd Fellows' Hall, Halifax.
2. The discussion to be for five nights, viz.:—October 31, November 1, 2, 3, and 4. The first proposition to occupy two nights, and the second proposition to occupy three nights.

3. The discussion to continue for two and a half hours each evening, viz. :—Each speaker to occupy two periods of thirty minutes each, and one of fifteen minutes each.

4. Iconoclast to open the first night, Mr. Matthias the second night, and alternately to the close of the discussion.

5. Each night the discussion to commence at half-past seven.

6. Admission to be by tickets : front seats, sixpence; second seats and platform, fourpence; back seats and gallery, twopence each.

7. Each Committee to have equal power over the distribution of the tickets.

8. No signs of approbation or disapprobation shall be allowed; and no person shall be allowed in any way to interrupt the meeting.

9. One chairman to preside each evening.

10. One competent reporter to be employed, who shall be expected to do equal justice to both parties in this discussion; his expenses to be defrayed out of the proceeds of the sale of tickets. The reporter to furnish a full and accurate report of the discussion within a fortnight after its close. When approved by both the disputants, this report to be printed under the direction of the joint committee, but neither side to be allowed to introduce any new matter, nor suppress any argument or statement accurately adduced; and both parties to consider themselves pledged not to sanction the publication of any other report than the one published by the joint committee.

11. The surplus proceeds, if any, after paying rent of the hall, or any other debt contracted by the joint consent of the joint committee, to be equally divided between the two committees. If there be any deficiency the two committees to be equally responsible.

12. These terms to be signed by both the disputants, and Secretaries of their respective committees.

THOMAS D. MATTHIAS.
ICONOCLAST.
WILLIAM JAGGARS.
JEREMIAH OLIVE.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is all I need read to you at present, and now allow me to say that whatever opinions we may entertain it is our duty to give a fair and impartial hearing to each of the disputants. I trust that the questions will be discussed with that seriousness which their importance requires. It is not to be expected that the arguments on either side will be exhausted in these five nights; those who have never considered these subjects before, and who wish to be fully informed, will do well to prosecute the enquiry further.

Allow me to call your attention to the notices on the walls of the room, which say that no signs of approbation or dis-

approbation are allowed. The observance of this rule will tend greatly to the saving of time and the furtherance of good order.

It would not become me to take up more of your time, seeing that two and a half hours have to be occupied by the two disputants, I therefore call upon Iconoclast to open the discussion on the first proposition.

ICONOCLAST: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and friends: The proposition which I have undertaken to affirm before you is this, "That the history of Jesus Christ as narrated in the four gospels is incredible." The whole burden and weight of this proposition lies upon my shoulders, and it will not, unless my friend should affirm some new matter, be necessary for him to do more than reply to that which I shall advance; but I must beg your distinct attention to the mode in which we both deal with our subject, because so long as he contents himself with replying to that which I advance, so well and good. But the moment he presumes for any book, or for any statement, or for any man, any authority whatever, the onus will lie upon him of proving that authority attaches to that man, that book, or that statement. Now it will be necessary to be very careful in the consideration of the question, "Is the history of Jesus as narrated in the four gospels credible?" I hold in my hand a summary of the principal evidence for the truth and divine origin of the Christian revelation, designed chiefly for the use of young persons, by Beilby, late Lord Bishop of London, and in that I am told that the books which contain the history of Christ and the Christian religion are the four gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. "That all the gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear,—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John," he says, "there is no more reason to doubt, than that the histories of Livy or Tacitus were written by those authors: the passages are quoted from them word for word by a regular succession of Christian writers from the time of Christ to this hour, and at a very early period their names are mentioned as the authors of the respective gospels." Now I shall have to submit that this statement brought forward by Beilby is positively untrue. I shall have to submit that there is not the slightest evidence that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John had any connection whatever with the gospels which are spoken of as

belonging them, and therefore in considering whether the history of Jesus Christ be credible or no, I must beg of you to dismiss from your minds anything that may be said in relation to any man having borne testimony to him whatever, for I deny that any man knows when the gospels were written, where they were written, or by whom they were written; and I deny that any man can trace these gospels as existing nearer than 200 years to the Christian era: that is, than A.D. 200, to use a common phrase. This is the first step with which I set out. It may be alleged that certain men have quoted these gospels. If he so allege, it will be necessary for him to point out who quoted them and when they were quoted, for I have not only to allege evidence in my favour that these books are absolutely anonymous, but I have to allege that the Christian evidence makers have sought to manufacture authors for the books by adducing false proofs. No less a man than one whose works created a great sensation at the time, Paley, has condescended to positively misrepresent, to positively misstate, for the purpose of supporting that which they urge is true, and I have to demand that the moment you find false witnesses called in in support of any case, that moment it is your duty to look at it with suspicion and doubt. The very fact of false witnesses being called in shows there is a deficiency of true testimony, or otherwise the persons who support the case would not need to suborn witnesses in their favour. Paley says "Papias, a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp, as Irenæus attests, and of that age as all agree, in a passage quoted by Eusebius, from a work now lost, expressly ascribes the respective gospels to Matthew and Mark." This is simply and positively untrue. Now supposing for a moment that Eusebius had said so of Papias, it would have been no evidence, because Eusebius has been convicted on the clearest evidence of manufacturing testimony in favour of the authorship of different books which suited his purpose, and therefore it would be no proof to our friends that Eusebius has quoted from Papias. But when we come to investigate the matter and find what Papias says, we find that he denies in the preface of his works being a hearer or witness of the Holy Apostles at all, and yet Paley says he was a hearer of one of them. In the next place we find that if the evidence of Papias be worth anything, it proves there were other gospels existing besides those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

because Papias speaks of the history of a woman which is "contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews," therefore if Papias' evidence is to be taken at all, it will go to cast great doubt on our present canonical gospels, because it will show that others existed which were treated as equally true and respectable. Now I have to urge that Papias by the way in which he refers to Matthew and Mark, evidently had no knowledge whatever of, and did not refer to the gospels we have here. What does he say of Mark?—and this is only what Eusebius says of him. We have not the writings of Papias, but have only the writings of Eusebius; the writings of a man, who himself stands in the position before the learned world of having either himself forged, or having uttered forgeries to support his cause—we have only his evidence of what Papias says. Now take the words, what do they mean? Speaking of Mark he says—"Mark became a regular expounder of Peter and wrote accurately whatever he delivered, not indeed in regular order, such things as were either said or done by Christ, for he was neither a hearer nor a follower of Christ. But afterwards as I said he followed Peter, who delivered his teachings as occasion served, but did not make a regular arrangement of our Lord's words, thus writing some things as he delivered them." That description will not apply to the gospel of Mark, for the gospel of Mark is in regular order and regular arrangement. Then what does Papias say of Matthew? "Matthew, then, in the Hebrew dialect wrote the oracles: and each person interpreted them as he was able." What has that to do with our gospels? and yet Paley has the audacity to say that Papias expressly ascribes the respective gospels to Matthew and Mark. I think you will say that not only are the gospels anonymous, but that some Christian evidence writers having found the necessity of fathers, have manufactured fathers for the purpose of imparting an air of credibility to them. Now in this question, in my endeavour to show that the history of Jesus is not credible, it will be of the utmost importance to show with what evidence we have to deal. If I show that the writings are not only anonymous, but actually have false claims made in relation to them, you will have that which of itself is sufficient to cast doubt over the whole. Now when we begin to look at this subject more carefully, we find that there is no evidence noted as to Matthew, none as to Mark, none as to

Luke, and none as to John; no evidence whatever to show, when, where, or by whom these gospels were written; in fact we have this which goes to the contrary—we have positive evidence that though these gospels are pretended to be the earliest ones, the fathers and early writers quote and mention other gospels, but never mention these four gospels by name at all. I am now speaking of writers during the first and second centuries—that these do not mention the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John at all. So that you break off at the period where you require most friends: as you get near the time you loose all clue and stand forward with anonymous writings whose existence you can only trace to within 200 years of the period when Christ was living. What would you say if I came before you at the present day with a tale with as high improbabilities in it, and if I said there lived in the year 1600 a man who did so and so, and said so and so? Why you would judge the tale by its probabilities, and if utterly improbable; if it contradicted your experience, if it contradicted every fact you had hitherto acquired, you would say “I cannot believe it, and must reject it.” But to guard against this great difficulty, such men as Beilby, Lardner, and Paley carry their data back to the time contemporary with Christ. It is positively untrue—that is the first statement I make in relation to this. Now the only evidence about Matthew is that Matthew wrote some oracles in Hebrew. It has been objected—supposing for one moment, which I do not admit—supposing for one moment that these oracles were the gospel, what has become of the original Hebrew? How is it we have no account whatever of these gospels being a translation from the Hebrew? The other part of the book (the old testament) we have been told has been translated from the Hebrew, but this which you tell me Papias referred to as written in Hebrew, this gospel of Matthew is nowhere known to be a translation. What has become of the original Hebrew? Is it lost? Has the translation superseded the original? You must remember here that in investigating this matter we have a right to apply to it the most strict tests. This book comes before us claiming at our hands higher and more extreme admiration and worship than any other book, and we must judge it by a standard so strict as in some degree to meet the requirements it makes at our hands. Now here we have a book which we are told was written in Hebrew, having

no mark upon it of being a translation—not differing from the others so as to point out that it is a translation—no evidence of being translated by any one at any time, nothing to distinguish it, nay more, we have this extremely suspicious matter in connection with it—when we come to the English translation we shall be told that the translators have erred in translating this English from the Greek. If this is translated from the Hebrew, and the Hebrew lost, who is to tell the errors which have occurred which nobody than check? If there are so many errors in the translation from Greek to English—errors which we can only detect by the examination of one with the other, who is to tell the errors made by those whom nobody can check at all? I shall pass from the question of the authorship of the gospels, and you will distinctly remember the position I have taken. It will be for my friend if he raise anything upon the point to show how and in what way he does it. It will not be sufficient for him to tell me that no question should be raised in reference to these books. It will not be sufficient for him to tell me that these books have been admitted to be written by the men whose names are prefixed. They have not been admitted but disputed from the earliest times. The only reason we have not the authors to array before you is this, that the people who were strongest burnt the authors and their writings, when they could get them together. These objections have been urged, and it will be wrong to appear before you and say that these are urged for the first time, and if for the first time then that is no objection to them. Was it an objection when Harvey first discovered the circulation of the blood that no man had discovered it before? Was it an objection to the man who laid the first telegraph line that no man had done it before him? It is never too late to discover truth and to lay it before your fellows. Every matter will be laid before you, the false be rebutted and the true proved useful. In any case it will provoke thought, and in any case it is the duty of men whose aim is to discover the truth to attend, so that they may judge for themselves. Now the first verse of the first chapter of Matthew, is “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,”—and I will make my objections to these genealogies; not only taking the one in Matthew, but taking them altogether—and I will take the genealogy, it being the first that greets us, in Matthew. I

have to object first that we find two genealogies, and they do not agree with one another. I have to object next that we find a mode of comparing them partially in the old testament, which agrees with neither, and I have to object therefore that the history of Jesus is utterly incredible, even in the first step you take on the threshold of the investigation. I need not read the whole genealogies of Matthew and Luke. It will be sufficient to tell you that one begins with David, and traces it through Solomon: the other with David and traces it through Nathan. It will be necessary to point out several discrepancies between them and the old testament. Luke and the old testament have some points of coincidence, which only increase our difficulty. If they had none, it might be said that they had no reference one to another. In Matthew we find that the son of David was Solomon, and so on until we get to Ozias, and in the old testament we trace from David to Ahaziah, whom I presume to be the same allowing for the spelling. But in the 22nd chapter of the Second book of Chronicles, and the 11th verse, we find one Joash, who is not mentioned in Matthew at all. If the genealogy in Matthew is correct, why is the name not mentioned? We find another man, Amaziah, who is mentioned in the 24th chapter of the same book and the 27th verse, who is not mentioned in Matthew at all, and in the 26th chapter of the same book, Uziah, who again is not mentioned in Matthew, where we skip from Ozias to Jotham, when in fact three generations of men have come in between. I submit that this is sufficient to show you that the gospels are not credible and reliable. We now go on with the list of names, allowing for the peculiarity of the Greek and Hebrew spelling. We come to Josiah, in Matthew, and are told that Jechonias was the son of Josias, but in Chronicles we find Eliakim was the son of Josiah. Then we are told that Zorobabel was the son of Salathiel, but on reference to the old testament we find that he was not the son of Salathiel at all, but was the son of Pediah, the son of Salathiel. We find that Luke ever since he left David has given different names altogether. The two agree when they come to Salathiel, but Luke tells you that Salathiel was the son of Zorobabel, thus contradicting the old testament. Then Luke tells us that Rhesa was the son of Zorobabel, and Matthew says Abiud was his son, and the Chronicles say neither of them. I have now pointed out how

these contradict each other. How is this attempted to be dealt with? There are several ways in which this is attempted to be got over. I will first give the opinion on an explanation to my argument which is used in the note to the Douay bible. You find in the note to the third chapter of Luke these words "Luke, chap. 3, verse 23—Who was of Heli. St. Joseph who by nature was the son of Jacob, in the account of the law was the son of Heli. For Heli and Jacob were brothers by the same mother, and Heli who was the elder, dying without issue, Jacob as the law directed, married his widow; in consequence of such marriage, his son Joseph was reputed in the law the son of Heli." This is simply a pure invention to get over a difficulty—an invention not bettering the matter, because if you suppose that these two persons were brothers they must have had the same father, and not have different ancestors. So that you have still the difficulty remaining the same. If Jacob and Heli were brothers, Jacob and Heli would be the sons of the same father, and their father would have the same father, therefore the ancestors should be coincident and agree one with the other. But again, for there is another invention to get over—they say although brothers they were not brothers—although sons of the same mother, they were not sons of the same father, and therefore had different fathers. But then you have this strange thing greeting you: if different genealogies altogether, how is it you find Salathiel and Zorobabel occurring as father and son in both? Our friends say there is another way of accounting for it you have not yet noticed: one is the genealogy of Joseph and the other the genealogy of Mary. "Which?" "Luke, they say." Why Luke? what are Luke's words? Our friends allege to get over the difficulty that Luke gives the genealogy of Mary. Luke speaks in this way—of Jesus being the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli. Now Luke—when I use this word do not let it be supposed to mean that I admit the authorship: I only use the word to indicate which book I refer to. When Luke says Joseph the son of Heli, did he mean Mary the daughter of Heli? Does the gospel say one thing and mean another? because if that argument is worth anything, then in every place if a man have a theory which disagrees from the text, he may say that the text means something else. If we admit this argument at all, we must give up language and give up reason, and confess you are not

dealing with one another by words. But again if you believe Luke meant daughter, why does the same word mean son so repeatedly all through the genealogy? because this same word is used as son all through—and again you have the same difficulty, because if the genealogy of Matthew be that of Joseph, and the genealogy of Luke be that of Mary, they ought not to have any point of agreement at all. You find they do agree and contradict each other in several places, putting out the probability of their being distinct genealogies—so that our friends do not better themselves by their way of dealing with it.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen: I am here to deal with this subject in that manner which I think proper, and I am not going to subject myself during this debate to any dictation. The subject is one of the most momentous, serious, and important in all time and throughout the whole world. With regard to the credibility of the gospels, I do not hang them as upon a tenter hook, upon the testimony of one Papias. I may certainly call in Papias as a collateral testimony, but where there are so many testators and so much to be alleged in evidence, I scarcely know how to begin, and then afterwards how to go forwards. You will read in the last chapter of the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans of one Hermas, and you will read likewise in the writings of the same Christian author of one Barnabas. Now we find extant communications from those times in the writings of these certain persons, so that we are carried not only to the threshold, but are carried right into the middle of the apostolic age. Of course it would not be possible for me this evening, within the course of half an hour, to give you the writings of those persons to which I have referred; and not only is there Hermas and Barnabas, but there is likewise Clement, who is again referred to in the gospel oracles. Then we have besides the testimony of Ignatius, of Polycarp, of Irenæus, and a great many others. We have also the testimony of Justin Martyr, of Clement of Alexandria, of Tertullian, and more particularly and especially—because of his most excellent character, and his erudition—that celebrated champion of Christianity in the third century, the learned Origen. Now in approaching the credibility of the four gospels, I approach it—taking the hint from Mr.

Bradlaugh: I approach it as I would approach the writings of Tacitus and Livy, or the writings of any of the Greek and Latin historians, and I apply to them the same critical canon as I would apply that canon to the documents of Tacitus, Livy, and Thucydides, or any other Greek or Roman authors: and if I find—not to my own satisfaction only, but to the satisfaction of us all—that the universal literary world are satisfied that these are the genuine literary documents of those authors who are said to have been their originators;—if I apply that same critical canon to the four gospels as *the documents* handed to us containing *the tradition of Christ*; his life, death, and so on; and if I find that not only have I equal testimony—I mean equal when compared with the others—of the credibility and authenticity of these, and far more, I cannot reject them if I accept the others on the same critical data; and if the critical data applied to the four gospels is not only as much—and equal to—but a great deal more—I should not err if I said one hundred times as strong—I cannot as a literary man, and as a critic, reject the credibility of the four gospels, when I look to them as coming tested by those persons to which I have referred to, as making mention of them in their writings and speaking of them as the writings of the persons to whom they are attributed—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Now I find in Justin Martyr—and it will be necessary for me to tell you why Justin Martyr does not mention Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—He was a Christian apologist for the Christian system to the Roman emperor—endeavouring to persuade the emperor to grant what we now so generally and gratefully enjoy—toleration; beseeching him that the iron and fiery hand of persecution might be withdrawn, so as to grant the Christian system fair play to develope itself, and place before men its title to their scrutiny and their examination; as being that which is true and good; and that which is of essential service and benefit to man. Now Justin Martyr in writing to the emperor mentions, or gives quotations, that is extracts, from the four gospels;—I repeat it, gives quotations from the four gospels; but in writing to the emperor it was not necessary to mention or name the authors themselves; for what would that emperor know, or could be presumed to know about these men. He was writing to the emperor of Rome, *who was a pagan*, and whom we must suppose knew nothing, or would know nothing—

because of the perversity of paganism—of this Christian religion, which having begun in Judea, had been propagated throughout the Roman empire, and was pushing its way on every hand, in spite of all that was done to push it back, and keep it down—having only the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, to develope itself, and get for itself a platform whereon it could display its glorious and magnificent truths. But we come to other writers: we come to that celebrated Christian apologist, Tertullian; and here we find not only quotations from the four gospels, but we find that Tertullian mentions the several evangelists by name—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. If I understand my opponent rightly, he says that no allusion is made during the first two centuries to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as the writers of the four gospels. I do not mean to say that he has asserted willingly, knowingly, and consciously an untruth, but possibly he may not have examined the subject with that fairness and fulness which such a subject imperatively demands. I may say that when I was my opponent's age I might have stood in the same position myself. I examined, I read, I enquired, I looked wherever I could look,—sought wherever I might seek for something to throw light upon the subject—considering that if I was examining any other fact, or studying any other science, I would not content myself until whatever was known regarding that science had been thoroughly sifted and examined. And if I had remained at the half of my studies—if I had cut them short ten years ago, I should have remained where he is. But I prosecuted these enquiries with all diligence until I came to the conviction and conclusion which makes me stand before you here to-night—that these gospels are the genuine works of the authors whose names are appended to them, and are not only the genuine works of the four evangelists, but they contain "*the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*" With regard to the credibility of the four gospels, we have not only the references made to them by the persons to which I have referred, but we have likewise the documents themselves, bearing upon their very aspect, bearing I say upon their very surface the marks of genuineness and authenticity. Now I was much struck by the ingenious manner in which my opponent endeavoured to shirk the question. Having asserted that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not the authors, I

was expecting to hear from him who were the authors, but he tells us that the originals were burnt:—by whom? That will remain for Mr. Bradlaugh to tell us. Who burnt them? who committed them to the flames? where? when? and how? Assertions in such a matter as this should certainly be made palpable by the most evident and demonstrable proof. Burnt? Who burnt them? When we are demanded to exhibit the originals themselves—the manuscripts which contained the handwriting of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we are demanded to do more than is demanded with regard to the works of heathen authors to which reference has been already made—Livy, Tacitus, and Thucydides. Where are the original manuscripts of these? “and echo answers, where?” And because we have not these; because we have not the originals on which they penned their historic and poetic thoughts, is that a reason to reject the writings, and say they are not the writings or productions of those learned authors? Again I retort—I claim the same fair play for the critical examination of the four gospels, which is claimed for the others, and when the critical canon applied to the others is found equally sufficient and demonstrative when applied to the four gospels, I demand that they be received as credible—as far as that goes—even as the others. Then there is borne upon the face of the four gospels an air of credibility, there is such a *vraisemblance*, a *verisimilitude*—we find throughout the four gospel biographies—I say we find throughout the whole of them *the cast* of the greatest truth, ingeniousness, and honesty. When a man sits down to write a literary forgery, the labour which is exhibited in his production—the pains taken and the care had to dovetail each incident into the other, at once manifests it to be a forgery. But we find with regard to the four gospels, there is that *abandon*, that ingeniousness, that candour and honesty which at once appeals to the understanding heart, and carries immediate conviction along with it. So much for that at present. I may return to this argument again. But with reference to the genealogy of Christ as recorded in the first chapter of Matthew, and then again its harmony with the genealogy in the third chapter of Luke. Already has this been replied to; and they are at once harmonized when it is stated that Matthew gives us the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke gives us the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Jewish law and custom is this—that a son-in-law takes

all the rights of the son: that is when a man marries the daughter of a man, he is at once entitled his son. This law you will find proved in the book of Joshua, with regard to Uchsah, the daughter, if I remember well, of Caleb. The husbands take the rights of inheritance from the father, as if they had really and actually been his sons. So that if in Luke we consider that Joseph is the son-in-law of Heli, there at once the harmony is cleared up: and then with regard to the apparent discrepancy, this is cleared up when we consider that Matthew and Luke are tracing up the one to Abraham, and the other back to Adam. I shall enter more fully into this argument to-morrow evening. I consider enough however has been said to make it apparent how the two are harmonized—Matthew and Luke's genealogy—when we consider that the one gives us the genealogy of Joseph and the other of Mary, Joseph taking her place as her husband, and the son-in-law of Heli. With regard to the credibility of the gospels, there is one thing again to which I believe our serious attention should be directed in examining this question, and that is the writings of Josephus, the Jewish historian. You say Josephus makes no mention of the matter, for the passage in Josephus which makes reference to it is disputed. Granted; and let it be passed aside. I consider that the silence of Josephus is one of the greatest arguments for the credibility of the gospels. I consider it one of the most powerful, conclusive, and demonstrative arguments upon the credibility of these gospels, with reference to the history they give and biography they afford of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know what Josephus was. He has been proved to have truckled to the Roman patricians, and his desire was to stand well with the Roman court. There is a paper by a celebrated author of the present day, Thomas de Quincy, who proves that the Essenes were the primitive Christians, and by this name Josephus endeavoured to put aside the Christians. Now Josephus naturally as a *prejudiced Jew*, haughtily and superciliously endeavoured to do all he could to crush this heresy which he considered inimical to that Judaism to which he was so very much attached. And then passing away from Judah,—passing on from Josephus—we come again to the writings of Tacitus, the writings of Suetonius, and other pagan writers who make reference to Christ and to his crucifixion by Pilate the Roman procurator. Had Jesus Christ never lived or existed, never

been crucified as we have the information given us in the four gospels, how is it that Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and others refer to these events? It will be for my friend to answer this question, and it will be for him to show how these references are made to facts and matters which never occurred. Or supposing he does say that a few of the incidents recorded are true, it will be for him to prove which is true and disprove the others connected with them in the gospel narrative as untrue—picking out a solitary fact here and saying this is fact, and picking out another and saying this is not fact, for we have the whole facts *there* following one another *seriatim*—they are consecutive and as I have said there is that *vraisemblance*, that appearance of truth about the records which carries conviction to every honest and enquiring mind. With regard to the credibility of the four gospels we have the united testimony of the whole Jewish people, past and present. Here we have six millions of Jews, and from the ingenious calculations of some it would appear that they have remained at that number for the past 1800 years—there they are among the nations of the earth, wanderers, “mankind their country and their home the grave.” Ever since the destruction of their grand and gorgeous temple they have been wandering in every clime, and the testimony they bear—one and all—is this, that there arose at one time an impostor, Jesus Christ, who proclaimed himself to be the true Messiah, whom they rejected, whom their fathers crucified upon a tree, and whom his disciples said arose again according to his previous prediction upon the third day. Now had the gospel been incredible, why here are the people to give us all information on the question and subject. How is it that none of the learned Rabbins,—that none of the learned writers of the Jewish commonwealth—from Christ’s times down to this day, possessing as they do historic documents—how is it that they have not given us something to satisfy us on this very important subject, upon this vexed question? The answer is ready at hand—it is quite apparent that they could not because they dare not. They could not, because to unite to disavow them would be what the whole world would have arisen against them to tell them it was a lie. That such a man as Jesus was born, lived, laboured, worked miracles, was crucified, arose again on the third day according to the testimony of his disciples—they could not ignore the fact. There were the whole primitive

Christians spreading and increasing throughout the whole Roman dominion and testifying to the indubitable and unquestionable facts on this important matter. The credibility of the four gospels is one which comes down thus attested to us by Christian authors, by pagan authors, and by the Jews themselves. It comes down attested to us from a long line of unquestionable testimony—as I have said before, testimony which if applied to other documents is considered to be valid, satisfactory, and sufficient, and therefore I claim for the four gospels the like credibility as that which is claimed for the historians of the Grecians, and the Latin people.

ICONOCLAST: My friend in one instance at any rate mistook what I said, and therefore I will correct that before I proceed further. He said that I stated the gospels were not written by Matthew; Mark, Luke, and John. I did not say that: I said that there was no proof that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John had anything to do with them: that I did not know who the author was and that as far as we were concerned they were perfectly anonymous books. In the next place I did not say that the originals were burnt. I do not know that there were any: I do not know anything about them. What I said was that the Christians had burnt the writings of those who wrote to oppose them and occasionally the writers also; and my friend no doubt misunderstood me. He has not said anything about Papias, and so we may take that he has admitted my argument against that quotation as far as it goes; but he has in opposition quoted Irenæus, Hermas, Justin Martyr, and several others. He should have remembered that I laid down as a matter for his attention that whoever used evidence before you, the onus of proof would lie upon him by whom it is advanced. I deny first of all not only that Justin Martyr ever mentioned the names of the gospels, because that he admits, but I deny that Justin Martyr ever mentioned such a book as a gospel at all. The Christian fathers feeling this have forged a passage which the learned Schliermacher compelled the later defenders of Christianity to expunge as spurious. Next I assert that the writings Justin Martyr quotes from are evidently not our gospels, for he mentions many things not in them at all, and the only book which he mentions is "the Memorials" but what that is I do not know at all. My friend has evidenced Justin Martyr

as a man who proves the gospels, and before I quote a passage from him I will draw your attention to another fact—that at least two-thirds of the writings attributed to Justin Martyr are admitted to be forgeries by Christian people themselves, and I do not for to-night's purpose admit a line of them. The burden lies with my friend to show the truth of all that he advances, and I am bound not to admit a line, when the Christian fathers are proved to have forged so much for him, and if our powers of detecting spurious testimonies were increased we should probably prove the whole forged. I will read the list of his works given not by infidels but by the other side of the question. We have three sets of works. First, admitted works: The Greater Apology, the Lesser Apology, and the Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. Then doubtful works: Address to the Gentiles, Exhortation to the Gentiles, On Monarchy and Epistle to Diognetus. Then come actually admitted spurious works: Exposition of the True Faith, Epistola ad Zenani et Serenum, Refutation of Certain Dogmas of Aristotle, Questions and Answers addressed to the Orthodox, Questions from Christians to the Gentiles, and Questions from the Gentiles to Christians. And our friend quotes Justin Martyr. He has just as much right to quote a man who offers forged bank notes in a question as to the genuineness of a bank note, as to quote such a man to prove the existence of the gospels. Now to show that Justin Martyr does not prove all he is attempted to be made to prove, Justin speaks of "a certain man whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, prophesied that those who believed on our Christ would spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and after this would be the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men." Would Justin Martyr if he believed in him have spoken of him as a certain man named John? But my friend says he did not mention the gospels or their writers, because he was addressing a Roman emperor. How does he know this? Justin does not say so, and it is only an invention on the part of my friend to make up for a deficiency of evidence. There is such a thing as knowing too much. My friend puts it upon me that I have not been sufficiently careful, and I put it to him that he has been too careful, and has found out for Justin Martyr that which he has not found out himself. There are six passages I could give from Justin, and would

give you for answer to his assertions, only as our friend has not quoted one word from Justin and as the whole onus lies upon him, it is not for me to demolish Justin, till he brings something more forward. There are six passages quoted in Justin which are not from our gospels, but from some other gospels. Our friend quotes Barnabas: why should he not quote the gospel of Barnabas? which is equally as true as the four gospels and no more true, equal as evidence in support of the credibility of the gospels and no more than Justin. Will he when he quotes these model fathers whom he has mentioned to you—this Irenæus, this Clement, this Barnabas, this Polycarp, and this Hermas—will he tell you that these works were once ten times as large as they are, and that nine-tenths of them have been demonstrated to be forgeries, and given up by the learned world? and these are the works of the men whom he quotes. Then again I have to repeat the same denial I before made; I have to deny that within 200 years of the Christian era you can find any evidence in proof of the existence of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He says there is Tertullian. I might answer Tertullian goes more into the third than the second century. If he drags Tertullian into the second century, he must prove the time he wrote, and what he did write, and then we will deal with him. I will not be content to be told that these men give corroborative evidence, I must have it, and then I will deal with it and answer it. I deny that there is any reliable evidence of the prior existence of these four gospels, or that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John had anything to do with them. It will not do for my friend to give statements, but he must give the passages from the works he quotes, and then I shall know what I have to deal with. My friend has not yet dealt with the objections I made to the genealogies, that neither Matthew nor Luke agreed with the old testament. He does not I presume think that worthy of notice, but I think in dealing with the credibility of the gospels it ought to be noticed that the old testament contradicts both those gospels. But now he says that Luke gives the genealogy of Mary. I have great respect for my friend, but I cannot accept him in opposition to Luke—for the book of Luke does not say so, and he has no right to tell us that Joseph the son of Heli, means Mary the daughter of Heli. Now again my friend says that Matthew gives the

genealogy of Joseph, and what follows from this? Matthew and Luke are both tracing Jesus up to David, and as Joseph was not the father of Jesus I ask why is the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph given at all. I do not see how he will meet that objection. I also raised objection to Salathiel and Zorobabel occurring as father and son in both Matthew and Luke, and I put it to you as absurd to suppose that these names would agree, where all the rest disagree. But I have something more to deal with on that subject. Not only is it not the fact that Luke gives the genealogy of Mary, but we find some evidence of it in the gospels themselves. We are told that Joseph went to Bethlehem to be numbered because *he* was of the house of David: if it had been Mary it would have said so. I submit with due submission to my friend that the whole probabilities are on my side: firstly that the genealogies themselves do not bear out the supposition that one is that of Joseph, and the other that of Mary: in the next place that the genealogy of Joseph has no relation to Jesus, and in the next place they contradict one another, and are therefore incredible. Now before passing the genealogies for a moment—I shall deal with them again and with the question of the fathers if our friend advances anything more on that subject—I have one matter to which I should draw the attention of my friend. He says that the genealogies of women are never given: that the Jews do not mention women at all in their genealogies. It is curious not only that we have several instances of women being mentioned, but it is curious that three women are mentioned in Matthew: Rachab, Ruth, and Bathsheba—about three of the worst that could be mentioned. I do not wish to introduce a subject which my friend may say is apart from the question in hand, but I do assert that neither Ruth, Rachab, or Bathsheba are what should class among our types of moral women. In Matthew, chapter 1, verse 17, we find it stated “the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.” Now this is not true, and I have to ask my friend to explain why Matthew has made so grand a mistake in his computation of the genealogies—when in the last division we have only thirteen names instead of fourteen, even including the name

of Christ. I want him to explain whether they are the genealogies of the same people or different people! How it is that from David to Zorobabel there are in the old testament twenty-one generations: in Matthew seventeen generations, and in Luke twenty-three generations. How is it that in Matthew from David to Christ there are twenty-eight generations, and in Luke from David to Christ forty-three generations? This is a matter requiring some explanation. I have done for a time with the genealogies, and the next matter I have to point out or notice is the account of the annunciation. You will find there are two annunciations: Matthew, chapter 1, verses 18 to 25, and Luke, chapter 1, verses 26 to 38: you can refer to them at your leisure. There is one thing that will strike you in reading them and that is that either they are accounts of two annunciations—one to Joseph and the other to Mary, or they are accounts of one and the same annunciation; but either supposition will be attended with great difficulty when dealing with the credibility of the books. If two, one would seem unnecessary. God would surely have announced his will to Joseph and Mary at the same time: and more especially when you find that the annunciation is not made to Joseph, not only not at the same time, not only that Mary does not tell him of it, but that the annunciation is not made until after Joseph has discovered Mary is with child, and had his suspicions aroused in consequence,—it is remarkable thus to be attended by these circumstances. I cannot allege there is any positive contradiction in the matter—it is quite—if you accept the theory of the angel at all, and I do not urge this very strongly upon you—it is quite within the bounds of religious probability, although not quite those of every day probability, that the two annunciations should have taken place. But the strangeness is that if you assume them made by a God of wisdom and of all-wise purpose the effects should have been to prevent doubt of Mary's chastity; but the annunciation is made to Joseph, only when Mary suffers from suspicion and is suspected by Joseph: two annunciations are made, one of them in a dream to Joseph, when he is suspicious as to the state of his betrothed wife. The next matter to which I wish to point attention is in immediate connection with the annunciation. In Matthew, chapter 1, verses 21 to 23, it is said "She shall bring forth a

son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." If you look to the 7th chapter Isaiah and 10th verse, you will find the angel has deliberately quoted language which has nothing to do with Jesus, and therefore must be an angel who quoted untruth, and thus strengthens the probability of no annunciation at all. If after reading the 7th chapter Isaiah, 10th to 15th verses, you turn to the 8th Isaiah, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses, you will find that not only does the former not relate to Jesus, but you will find the actual accomplishment in the very chapter referred to. Nay there is not a mark of correspondence between the prophetic child and Jesus. Jesus was not called Emmanuel; of butter and honey we have no evidence that he eat; I shall show that he did not know how to refuse the evil and choose the good. The whole prophecy referred to events which were about to happen immediately. The whole matter has been carefully argued out by others and if my friend attempt to rely upon this any longer I will deal with the matter more fully. You have the birth of Jesus specially announced by an angel to Joseph and Mary, and yet you find soon after that although Mary has sung a joyful song consequent on the annunciation, you find that when Simeon speaks and tells what the child shall become, they are surprised at it and do not understand it. Why were they surprised? Again when they found the child in the temple, and he says "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" they do not know what it means, so that either what the angel had said to them had been of little effect, or the annunciation did not occur at all. The next matter is the place of the birth of Jesus. In the 2nd chapter of Matthew, 6th verse, you find a quotation from the prophet "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least amongst the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel." Now Matthew lays the scene of the birth in Bethlehem and Luke lays the scene in the same place, especially bringing the child to Bethlehem for that purpose, and Matthew tells you why it is done, to fulfil a prophecy. In Micah, 5th chapter

and 2nd verse, you find that it is not a prophecy referring to Jesus at all. The words are these "But thou Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Now in the first place it is not quoted correctly in Matthew, and in the next place it cannot be said to apply to Jesus. This may be continued still farther. It was necessary for Matthew to fulfil a prophecy, and therefore he puts the place of birth as Bethlehem. But if you refer to the first chapter of John and 46th verse you find this phrase somewhat strange if Jesus was born at Bethlehem, "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph, And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip saith unto him "Come and see." Philip does not say he was not born at Nazareth, and at the 7th chapter of John and 42nd verse we find the people reproaching Jesus with not being born at Bethlehem. "But some said Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was?" Jesus in answer to this does not say, "I was born at Bethlehem," and there is nothing in John to lead to that supposition. First then we have the genealogies contradicting each other, and have one traced through the man who was not the father of Jesus. Next we have the birth announced by angels; the annunciation twice repeated, and yet having so little effect that what was told them was almost immediately forgotten, for they did not understand what the child meant when he said "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business." Next we have an absolute uncertainty as to the place of birth, and not only an uncertainty of the place of birth, but we have an uncertainty as to the time of birth. According to the gospel of Matthew he was born in the reign of Herod. There might be alleged some difficulty of distinguishing in this case, but luckily Luke has removed the difficulty by stating that Jesus was born at a time when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, and that a census was made at the time of Jesus' birth. If this be true what do you find? You find that one alleges that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod, the

king, and the other alleges he was born after Herod was dead and his son Archelaus was also dead or had ceased to reign. It is utterly incredible that he could have been born in the lifetime of Herod, and after he was dead too. As Cyrenius came to make a valuation of the substance, and administer to the property of Archelaus, he could not have been born till after Archelaus was dead or had abdicated, and supposing you admit Jesus was born after that, you have a series of assertions utterly thrown to the ground. According to Matthew, Herod having had an interview with wise men ordered the slaughter of a number of male infants. I ask my friend to find any profane author who mentions anything of the slaughter of these male children, and I submit, that if such an event had happened, historians must have chronicled it, and could not have failed to do so, especially as they mention others far less important. Again these wise men were preceded by a star, which marched before them until it rested over the place where Jesus was laid. That is the account according to one gospel; but according to the other it is much varied—and here again we have the two accounts positively contradicting one another. According to one account Mary obtained hospitality from some shepherds. The shepherds having seen some strange appearances in the night make the matter generally known. I will read the words of Luke and the words of Matthew so that you may be in no doubt whatever upon the subject. "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them," the shepherds having before said "Let us go into Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, and which the Lord has made known unto us." Now according to Matthew this is differently stated.

The Rev. T. D. MATTHIAS: I have a great deal of work cut out for me at present, and time will decide whether I shall be able within thirty minutes to go over the various objections which have been made. But I return again to my original point with regard to the credibility of the four gospels, again demanding that if the authorship of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John be denied, that we should have some *authors* found for those documents: for if we find them spoken of as the productions of those writers, which they in-

dubitably are—and I have already mentioned many proofs, and there are several more which you will find mentioned in works upon “The Evidences of Christianity,” such as Paley and other authors who have written on this subject. Now if I give you fair testimony of the genuineness and authenticity of the four gospels as the genuine productions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—I demand in all candour proof from my friend—I demand that he produce authors on his side as I do on mine, and when he brings his authors I shall have the opportunity of doing for him what he has been attempting to do for me, that is to invalidate the authors which I produce—but I deny that he has been able for a moment to invalidate the testimony of those authors. It is a fact that the genuineness of the gospels was not disputed till within the last 200 years, and more particularly the last 50 years. Is it not strange that the authors I have quoted and the names I have mentioned—that they were not disputed—that is, the credibility of the four gospels, and the genuineness of their authorship by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was not disputed till within the last 200 years—when there was an Italian who wrote a long dissertation as to how the four gospels originated. He said that there were twelve physicians who took upon them to sit down and write a book of this sort: to write the incidents and circumstances narrated here and palm it upon the world as a genuine work, giving an account of a man who never existed, and of deeds never wrought. The learned Leclerc replied to the document, and the thing will appear plain that it could not be—for how is it that there was no mention of these facts till this book appeared, about their being palmed or attempted to be palmed upon the world by these twelve doctors. Now we know that before the fourth century there were the authors I have already made reference to, such as Origen—and I should like my friend to give us any reason for disputing the testimony of that learned and excellent man, Origen, who was decidedly one of the most learned critics of the third century, and if ever a man was entitled to the veneration and admiration of posterity that man was Origen. He was acute, ingenious, learned, and enquiring. We find that in examining certain documents he pronounces such and such as not entitled to receive the respect of the Christian church; whilst other documents he pronounces, after critically ex-

amining them—the same as we examined the productions of William Shakespeare—to be works which should be received. There has been a work written in German, which applies the same kind of reasoning, and the same kind of objections to the life and times of Shakespeare which Strauss has applied to Christ—and this learned German, if you accept the theories of Strauss or of my friend Mr. Bradlaugh, proves there never had existed such a man as William Shakespeare, that is if it is shewn that the books were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and that such a man as Jesus did not exist: then the same critical data applied to Shakespeare's life and times proves that there never existed such an individual. The same thing has been done by Archbishop Whately, of Dublin, who has written a critical work to prove that there never did exist such a man as Napoleon le Grand. If you take the discrepancies here pointed out—mind I allow there are discrepancies, I allow that they are apparent—there are discrepancies in the life of Shakespeare and in the life of the Great Napoleon, uncle of the present Napoleon. I say that if the discrepancies in the life of Shakespeare, and in the life of Napoleon are to be taken in the same manner as my friend attempts to deal with Christ, then we prove that Christ, Shakespeare, and Napoleon never existed, and did the things they are said to have done and wrought. With regard to these discrepancies they are as I said apparent. I referred in my first address to the works of imposters; that such men in writing the life of Jesus Christ, a life be it supposed that never was—that never existed—would have taken care that the genealogy in Luke and Matthew should correspond word for word, person for person—and then with regard to the facts referred to in the different gospels—in giving the account of the annunciation referred to by Matthew and Luke they would take care that the same account should be given word for word, sentence for sentence, paragraph for paragraph, and you would not have had the discrepancies you find in the four biographies. Justin Martyr entitles these gospels, not memorials, but “Memoirs,” or the biography of Jesus Christ written by those his four biographers. And as I have said he was writing an apology to the Emperor Marcus Antonius, and in writing to the Emperor Marcus Antonius, it was not necessary that he should mention the names of those from

whom he makes quotations. True it is that there have been many productions ascribed to Justin Martyr, and other fathers of the Christian church, but then criticism has come and applied itself most minutely, candidly, and searchingly to these various productions, and after due examination some of them have been pronounced to be spurious, and have been set aside as forgeries, but after all the sifting and weighing the other documents and writings have been pronounced to be the genuine productions of those writers. In making my references to-night I make them to the productions pronounced to be genuine by those critics. During the past fifty years criticism has made rapid progress in Germany : criticism has explored the various fields of ancient literature, and there is scarcely an ancient document which has not come under the searching examination and critical enquiry of the ingenious critics of Germany ; and when we look at the four gospels and the writings of the Christian authors I have referred to this evening, these have come forth from the crucible of these learned men and pronounced to be genuine, and it will be for those who have denied their genuineness to bring forward better proofs that they are not genuine than they have yet done. With regard to the birth of Christ, as announced first of all to Joseph : it was announced to Joseph in a dream, and it was announced to Mary by the angel—I see no discrepancy in that. As I said it was announced to Joseph in one place in the form of a dream or vision, and to Mary in another by the presence of an angel. I see no discrepancy with regard to the two accounts. Then with regard to the birth of Christ. Chronology has decided on this fact. From the building of the city of Rome we find that Jesus was born 750 years, and from the building of the city of Rome we find that Herod died 751 years, and I call on my friend to give a better chronology than that and to prove the contrary. In comparing the accounts of Josephus and Berosius, and comparing the dates they give, year for year, and fact for fact, this is the result of the chronological question—I repeat it again that Jesus was born 750 years after the building of the city of Rome. With regard to chronology we must begin at some date or era, and this was the era the Romans employed. In our Christian country we date from the creation of the world, and our Christian era we date from the birth of

Jesus, and so we say it is 1859 anno domini, and in the same way the Romans counted from the building of the city of Rome. Looking at the dates of chronology we find that Jesus was born 750 years after the building of the city of Rome, and that Herod died A.D. 751. With respect to the massacre of the Innocents by the command or authority of Herod the Great, is it supposed that Josephus would mention it? It was the design of that mendacious pharisee to keep the matter as quiet as possible: and that this was his design Thomas de Quincy proves beyond all manner of doubt, and so his silence proves nothing at all. And then with regard to no other writer speaking about it—in Roman history you find little respecting Judaic matters. Not only do the writers not speak of the massacre of the Innocents, neither do they speak about the other cruel and brutal things perpetrated by that wicked and cruel monarch. It would appear to me to have the air of improbability providing the character of Herod had been described as a mild man, a man benevolent in action and who loved his subjects, and then had we heard about the murder of the children, it would have been for us to enquire how could a man so depart from his customary benevolence and commit such an atrocious act? But we know from the character of Herod the Great, who was so cruel and atrocious during his whole reign, that this deed was just of a piece with the character of that wicked and cruel man. Then again with respect to Cyrenius being governor of Syria. You find from the writings of Livy that before he was governor, he was sent as a census commission into the province of Syria, and if you consult the Greek word, you find it is “before” Cyrenius was governor of Syria. It requires a little care and minuteness—a little strictness of examination—before we come to hasty conclusions on matters of such moment as this. Now with regard to—I do not know whether there are any other objections I have not noticed through inadvertency—if so I shall take care to examine each according to the time allotted me to-morrow evening. Now I have not heard anything in reply to the statements and affirmations which I made in my previous half-hour’s address. I have heard nothing with respect to Josephus’ silence concerning these matters: I have heard nothing respecting the Jews. Jesus was a Jew, and Christianity is a continuation of Judaism. Jesus Christ

came of the seed of David, according to the flesh : Jesus Christ it is alleged in the four gospels was born at Bethlehem. I come to that point. We find, as you know, in the second chapter of Matthew, that in returning from Egypt, he, his father and mother went aside and dwelt in the city of Nazareth and there was the childhood of Jesus spent—which clears up that point at once. He was born at Bethlehem, and lived there up to the time of the flight into Egypt. They intended to return back to Bethlehem, but hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea, they thought it best to go into Nazareth—and the people understood him to have been born at Nazareth, because he lived at Nazareth, the same as I should readily suppose that you were born at Halifax until the fact was mentioned that instead of being born in this place, you were born in another place, and at some period of your lives came to reside in Halifax or the district, where at present you are resident. And then with regard to Jesus Christ, I submit he stood before the Jewish nation as the Messiah whom their father's expected, and of whom their seers predicted. They heard his doctrines, they witnessed his miracles, they saw his conduct and behaviour, but we know that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not." Why did they not receive him? Because he did not fulfil their sensuous and carnal expectations. They were sunken in the deepest and most degraded vices and immoralities—and when John the Baptist rung out those glorious words on the banks of the Jordan "Repent ye," there never was a time when it was more needed, nor ever was the word repentance rung in the ears of a people to whom it had a greater and deeper significance. Jesus Christ came not as they expected in their carnal and sensuous imaginations : not clothed with the pageantries of kings or eastern monarchs ;—he did not come with the sword and spear, and chariot of war ;—he did not come with cavalry,—he did not come with all the might and prowess of war—for the purpose of driving away their Roman masters, and restoring temporal power to Judah and making them masters of the globe ; but he came on a sublimer errand beyond the idea of that nation, as lamentably it is yet beyond the idea of tens of thousands on our globe, who seek to cut off all communications of man with the higher realm to which the aspirations of his higher nature tend. He came not to satisfy those wishing for tem-

poral power, splendour, and pageantry, but he came on a nobler and sublimer errand : he came to preach that sermon to which allusion has been made in this hall, " Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," a text which at once would be to the Jews the most revolting, for they were expecting not meekness but a sword and war, and the pageantry of earthly and temporal dominion. He came to teach those transcendent truths of moral power and excellence. (A Voice : Question.) I am on the question. I have already said I will not subject myself to the least dictation. I will take my subject and handle it as I please : I am on the subject of the credibility of the four gospels.

A VOICE : We have not come to hear a sermon !

MR. MATTHIAS : You shall hear what I please to say.

The CHAIRMAN ; I must just say it remains with Iconoclast to deal with what is said by Mr. Matthias, and not with any gentleman in the audience.

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS : These things are said to have been done in Judea,—these doctrines to have been enunciated,—these miracles performed,—that death endured,—that resurrection to have been enacted, and all the various matters referred to in the gospels. These things were done among the Jews, many of whom rejected the message : others were convinced and received his message in its spiritual import and significance. Now I am coming to the question, which I was coming to at the time I was interrupted. I demand that we should have some proof from these Jewish people that this person Jesus did not live as it is said he did, and act as he did act ; that we should have some denial from those who were the very parties from whom we might reasonably expect it. And yet we find that these Jews all allow that Jesus was born where it is said he was born, and they allow that he did perform many wonderful deeds, only with this reserve that he performed them by magic, and not as we believe by that power which was given him from on high, as the Messiah expected by their Jewish forefathers. Now with regard to the testimonies to which I have referred :

Hermas, Barnabás, Ignatius, and Polycarp. To-morrow evening I shall bring books and read extracts from their writings,—as we have them recorded,—wherein they refer to matters which are spoken of in the four gospels. And now there is another thing again which I intended speaking of before I sat down if time permitted and that was with regard to the copies of the original documents which we have from the primitive ages. We have no fewer than 670 copies of the originals, and we have not as many copies of any Greek or Latin writer. There are but 12 extant originals, copies of the original of Livy, though there are 670 copies—reaching back to the third century—of the four gospels. This is the proof which I referred to as being equal proof with regard to the genuineness and authenticity of these books. The works of Tacitus and Livy are proved from so many copies or manuscripts which we have, and if they are credited as such, why are not the gospels received with equal candour, and with equal ingeniousness, when we have not only 12 but 670 copies of these said originals, and these copies though they vary sometimes in the form of a letter, sometimes with regard to the omission of a letter—yet the 30,000 variations made out by that learned critic Mill that other very learned critic Bentley shows do not at all affect the sense.

ICONOCLAST: If my friend had not near the conclusion of his address said he intended to bring the writings of the fathers and read them, I should have objected that he seemed more in favour of silent testimony than speaking testimony. He asks me again to answer Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. It will be quite time to do it when he quotes from them, which he has not yet done. My friend says I have not done it yet, but he has not put forward one single testimony; one word of testimony which I am to answer. What he tells you I find given in the same words by Paley. I deny Paley's truth and reject and refuse to receive it. I have given one instance of Paley's falsity, and will give fifty if required. Now my friend although he has dealt with some matters has not yet thought fit to deal with the matters I have advanced. He has not dealt with the three genealogies which contradict one another, and has not shown any credibility in so doing. He has not shown why the genealogy

of Joseph should be given at all. As the morality of Jesus is to occupy three nights of the debate, he will do well to devote the rest of the time to-morrow evening to deal with the questions I have put. He says the non-existence of Napoleon and Shakespeare could be equally proved on my reasoning. In the first place this is not true, and in the second place it is not analogical. The new testament comes with higher claims than the life of Napoleon or Shakespeare. If our friend admits that the four gospels are of no more worth and authority than the writings of Shakespeare, then try them by the same standard and no other, pay the same obedience and no more, give each equal credence. My friend says there are discrepancies in the gospels, as there are discrepancies in the life of Napoleon or Shakespeare. Does he mean that we are to treat them analogically? If that is the effect of his argument, it is also the effect of mine. My friend then went on to say that which was not quite correct, and he will require a little more care in dealing with these matters: he said that Justin Martyr had mentioned *four* memoirs, which is not exactly the fact—therefore my friend had better quote Justin Martyr and then I will answer him. At present I deny it, and when he quotes it I will answer it. My friend says that Josephus' silent testimony should be answered. The gentlemen who forged testimony for Josephus did not think silence was sufficient, or that silent testimony could be in their favour, or they would not have thought it necessary to forge testimony. It is one of the greatest pleas against the testimony of the whole, that so early as the time of Eusebius it had become necessary to forge testimony. I was surprised to hear my friend, to hear him say that the authorship of the gospels had never been disputed till within the last 200 years. He has certainly not been careful in making that assertion. We cannot find the people who wrote against them because they have burnt the authors and their writings together. (Hisses.) If you hiss me for stating the truth you will not thereby advance the cause of truth. I was about to state that not only is it not a fact that there was no dispute, but that the very works of Irenæus are works written to the objectors who objected to these things altogether: written against heretics. He will perhaps say that the heresies did not go to dispute the gospels: they might not go to dispute Matthew, Mark, Luke;

and John. It might be that the particular gospels were not then in existence, although many gospels appear to have existed, and he must prove that they were in existence before he quotes Irenæus in his support. He says the genuineness of the gospels is proved by a long line of unquestioned testimony, but this he has yet to prove. He has quoted a learned man who writes in the fourth century—but supposing that in the fourth century a bishop did say that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did write these gospels, you admit that 300 years and more have passed, and the argument is of little use in proof of their genuineness. So much for what he says on that subject. He says with regard to the annunciation that there is no discrepancy. An angel was specially sent to acquaint a mother that her son about to be born is the Son of God, and yet that mother is astonished when her son says “Wist ye not I must be about my father’s business.” My friend goes on to say that Josephus wrote against Christianity, or was prejudiced against Christianity, and therefore did not write about it all. I find a long passage about Herod in the *Antiquities* of Josephus, 17th volume, 5th chapter, and 2nd paragraph, “It seemed to some of the Jews that Herod’s army was destroyed by God, thus taking deserved vengeance for the death of John, surnamed the Baptist. For Herod slew him though he was a good man and exhorted the Jews to cherish virtue, and whilst practising uprightness towards one another, and piety towards God, to have recourse to baptism.” And it goes on the matter of half a page to state that John on account of Herod’s fear of his great power of persuading men might lead to revolt, was sent in bonds to Machærus, and there put to death, and that the Jews thought Herod’s army was destroyed in vengeance for the death of John. Curiously enough in the whole passage there is not a word about Jesus, of John the Baptist being a Christian, or of John the Baptist having anything to do with Christ. My friend does mention Herod’s cruelties in proof of the massacre of the children, but he has scarcely given the point I urged the consideration it deserved, that such an event had it taken place must have been mentioned by the historians, who so often mentioned minor matters. Then he follows with the place of birth and again overlooks the point of the argument, which was that if Jesus was born at Bethlehem, when the Jews reproached him with not

coming from Bethlehem, why did he not say "I was born there," if it was the case? Now my friend says he has a chronological fact, but I deny his fact and require proof. He says Jesus was born in the year 750 from the building of Rome. There is not the slightest proof of this anywhere, and the person who makes such an assertion should give some proof. When my friend makes the statement the onus probandi lies upon him, as with me when I give you a statement I must give proof, or my friends cry out that I make an unsupported assertion. Supposing that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod, then Luke must be untrue, because the Emperor of Rome would have no more power to make a census and collect taxes there, than the Emperor of France would in England at the present moment: therefore if the account of my friend is true, the history of Luke is false. The next matter to which I shall have to draw your attention is the flight into Egypt: and on this I submit to you that we have no evidence whatever: not only no evidence whatever, but the reverse of evidence. First of all we have *prima facie* evidence that either Matthew or the writer of Matthew has manufactured a prophecy to fit into a tale, or the tale to fit the prophecy—for you find on referring to the 2nd chapter of Matthew and 15th verse, we are told that he went into Egypt, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son:" referring to Hosea, 11th chapter and 1st verse, which has no connection with the birth of Jesus at all, and is an instance of mendacity on the part of the writer of the gospel deserving of the strongest reprobation at our hands. Either the prophecy was invented to suit the tale, or the tale was invented to suit the verse. I leave my friend to the dilemma, and in either case I tell him it does not add to the credibility of the statement. Then again while Matthew pretends that Jesus went into Egypt, and remained there till after the death of Herod, and then did not return to his native place until after the death of Archelaus, the account in Luke does not give time for the journey at all—for in Luke we find that directly after the birth of the child, they went, not flying away because of persecution into Egypt, but going up to Jerusalem, to fulfil all things according to the law, and then returned to Nazareth and apparently dwelt there, going up to Jerusalem every

year. I say this flight into Egypt bears upon it the marks of improbability. It cannot be proved that Jesus was in Egypt and Judea at the same time, and as we have to allege that one account is false, it appears most likely that the account in Matthew is false and that he either manufactured a prophecy to fit a tale, or a tale to fit a prophecy—and in either case he is not credible. When the mother of Jesus and the father went to Simeon they were amazed at what Simeon said. Simeon said he should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel—and Mary marvelled, although an angel had been sent to warn her, and the very thing that Mary marvelled at, she had actually offered up a hymn of rejoicing to the Lord about.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: Provided there had been none of these seeming discrepancies between the four evangelists: provided there was a dove-tailing of these four narratives without any of these apparent contradictions, then I presume my friend would have objected to the credibility of the four gospels on that score, and have stated that there must have been *collusion* between the writers. But because that they dealt with a subject in all honesty and fairness, and directness; stating facts as they were, and giving us a current report of the incidents and events as they actually took place, then there is a seeming discrepancy picked out here, and an apparent contradiction pointed out there: whereas when the documents are fairly examined I must avow there is not the least real discrepancy between them. Now I have been challenged to give you quotations from the writers I referred to at the beginning. I have a few brief quotations here. In the Epistle of Barnabas, written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, the following remarkable quotation from Matthew occurs: 'Let us beware lest it come upon us as it is written,' 'There are many called but few chosen.' Again, the quotations, 'Give unto every one that asketh,' 'He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' The passage 'There are many called but few chosen' is contained in Matthew and in no other book in the world. And the manner in which it is quoted, namely, "it is written," is exactly the manner in which the Jews quoted from the old testament, and Barnabas, being a Jew, applied the same phraseology to a book of the new

testament, thereby quoting and recognising it as an inspired book, and entitled to the same confidence which a Jew gave to the old testament. This is 70 years after the birth of Christ. Clement, who had seen and conversed with the apostles, wrote an epistle in which the following passage occurs: "Especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, which he spake teaching gentleness and long suffering; for thus he said 'Be ye merciful that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven unto you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you give, so shall it be given unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye show kindness, so shall kindness be shown unto you; with what measure ye mete, the same shall it be measured to you.' By this command, and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we may always walk obediently to his holy words." Observe that these quotations are quoted evidently from memory, but contain the sense exactly and the words almost verbatim. It is the way in which all the fathers were accustomed to quote. He says again: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus." But not to occupy too much time, I will go on and give a quotation from the "Shepherd" of Hermas, ascribed to Hermas the cotemporary of Paul, and certainly of high antiquity. In it are such expressions as these "He that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery:" and speaking of Christ he says of him "Having received all power from his father." Then again Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, where men were first called "Christians," about 37 years after Christ's death, and who of course must have seen and conversed with most of the Apostles, wrote several epistles, containing evident allusions to the gospels. He says, "Christ was baptised of John, that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him." "Be ye wise as serpents in all things, and harmless as a dove." "The spirit knows whence it comes and whither it goes." Here are references to these very documents by persons who were contemporary with the Lord Jesus. Polycarp had been taught by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ. In an epistle he has the following, "If, therefore, we pray the Lord that he will forgive us, we ought also to forgive," "Beseeching the all-seeing God not to lead us into temptation." A quotation from the 5th chapter of Matthew "Remembering what the Lord said, teaching 'Judge not that ye be not judged; for-

give and ye shall be forgiven; be ye merciful that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again," and from the Acts of the Apostles he quotes 'Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of death.' We now come to Papias, a hearer of John, and cotemporary with Polycarp, who had heard the Apostles. In a work quoted by Eusebius, he ascribes to Matthew and Mark the gospels which bear their names. About 20 years after the preceding writers, Justin Martyr wrote. His allusions to Christ would almost form a history of his life, and all but two are contained in our present gospels. The following quotations are allusions to particular passages, in the writings of Justin Martyr, "Depart from me into outer darkness, which the father hath prepared for the Devil and his Angels," "I give unto you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon venomous beasts, and upon all the power of the enemy." "The son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified and rise again the third day!" He says of Matthew and John "As they have taught who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we believe them." He calls them "Memoirs composed by the Apostles and their companions." Hegesippus, a Christian writer thirty years later, relates that travelling from Palestine to Rome, he visited many bishops, and that "in every congregation, and in every city, the same doctrine is taught which the law, and the prophets, and the Lord, teach." This shows that the Gospels, one or more, were in the hands of the churches as of equal authority with the law and the prophets. He employs the usual phrase "The law and the prophets" for the old testament, and the "Teaching of the Lord" for the new. In a letter from Lyons, whose bishop, Pothinus, was ninety years old, (A.D. 170,) and whose early life must have reached back to the Apostles or their immediate cotemporaries, is this passage—"Thus was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Lord: that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Irenæus succeeded to Pothinus as Bishop of Lyons—a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. He was little more than a century from the publication of the gospels, and was instructed by one who had conversed with the Apostles. His testimony is as follows:— "We have not received the knowledge of the way

of our salvation by any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us. Which gospel they first preached, and afterward by the will of God committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the pillar and ground of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth declaring to men the blessings of heavenly peace, having all of them and every one alike, the gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding a church there, and after their exit, Mark, also the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things which had been preached by Peter, and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him (Paul). Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon his breast, likewise published a gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus, in Asia." Clement, of Alexandria, who lived sixteen years after Irenæus, alludes to the gospels, but I omit to quote more having presented you with sufficient for the argument. So much for the writers. It would not be prudent at present, as we have only two minutes, to enter upon an examination of the other matters which remain for a few remarks. Providing we are spared, to-morrow evening I shall enter with as much minuteness as time will afford us into the other subjects which demand our examination.

A vote of thanks on the motion of Iconoclast, seconded by the Rev. T. D. Matthias, was then accorded to the chairman

TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 1, 1859.

PROPOSITION (CONTINUED).

**"THE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST AS NARRATED IN THE FOUR
GOSPELS INCREDIBLE."**

MR. JOSEPH JENNINGS in the Chair.

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: Mr. Chairman and friends: The quarter of an hour which I occupied last evening was taken up with reference to those writers who testified to the credibility of the Christian testimony next the age of the Apostles. I followed this evidence as far down you will remember well as Hegesippus. This evening I continue it with Irenæus. One of the earliest Christian writers whose works have come down to us is Irenæus. The exact time of his birth is uncertain: but he was born in the first half of the second century, and but just survived its close. Let us see then what may be inferred from his writings concerning the common belief of Christians during his lifetime. Besides a few fragments of other writings there is only one of his works which remains to us, his Treatise against Heretics, a name which in his time was limited in its application to the different sects of Gnostics and Ebionites. It was in the name of the great body of Catholic believers, and in defence of their opinions, that Irenæus wrote. The first sentence of the following passage has been already quoted, and I now give you the words themselves of this celebrated Christian: "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those through whom the gospel has come down to us; which gospel they first preached, and afterwards by the will of God transmitted to us in writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith." Here is an express allusion to the four gospels. "For after our Lord had arisen

from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, descending upon them from on high, were filled with all gifts, and possessed perfect knowledge, they went forth to the ends of the earth spreading the glad tidings of those blessings which God has conferred upon us, and announcing peace from Heaven to men; having all, and every one alike the gospel of God. Matthew, among the Hebrews, published a gospel in their own language; while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself delivered to us in writing what Peter had preached; and Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded the gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon his breast, likewise published a gospel, while he dwelt at Ephesus, in Asia." The authenticity of John's gospel is shown at the conclusion, where he speaks of its author as being himself, the beloved disciple who leaned on the bosom of Jesus. Irenæus continues "And all these have taught us that there is one God, the maker of Heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets, and one Christ, the son of God. And he who does not assent to them despises indeed those who knew the mind of the Lord; but he despises also Christ himself, and he despises likewise the Father, and is self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, and this all heretics do." Here again is an allusion to the Gnostics, the Ebionites, and others. It will be observed that Irenæus, in defending the Christian doctrine, rests it upon the authority of the gospels; that he does this without mentioning the other books of the New Testament, that he considers the former as having been composed that they might be the foundation and pillar of faith of Christians, and them, without doubt or hesitation, to be the authors by whom we believe them to have been written. The next passage is to the same effect. "Nor can there be more or fewer gospels than these. For as there are four regions of world in which we live, and four cardinal winds, and the church is spread over all the earth, and the gospel is the pillar and support of the church, and the breath of life, in like manner is it fit that it should have four pillars, breathing on all sides incorruption and refreshing mankind. Whence it is manifest, that the Logos, the former of all things, who sits upon the cherubim and holds together all things, having ap-

peared to men, has given us a gospel, fourfold in its form but held together by one spirit." The next writer will be Theophilus, bishop of Antioch before the year 170, and died before the end of the second century. Of his writings we have remaining only one work, containing an account and defence of Christianity, addressed to Autolycus, a heathen. After some mention of the Jewish law and prophets he has this passage, "Concerning the righteousness of which the law speaks, the like things are to be found also in the prophets and gospels, because they all spoke by the inspiration of one spirit of God." The estimation in which the gospels were held by the Christians appears as well in the passage just quoted as in the following, "These things," says Theophilus, "the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all who were moved by the Spirit;" among whom John says, "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God." Having quoted a passage from Proverbs iv., 25, 26, which he interprets as a precept of chastity, he says, "But the Evangelic voice teaches purity yet more imperatively," and then quotes Matthew v., 28 and 32, in proof of his assertion. A little after he quotes several precepts from the gospel of Matthew, and from St. Paul, introducing those taken from Matthew with the expression "The Gospel says." We next come to Clement—passing from Carthage to Alexandria, the residence of Clement. Here was a celebrated school for the instruction of Christians, founded probably early in the second century, of which Clement was in his time the principal master. He was eminent during the latter part of the second, and the beginning of the third century. In the evidence which Clement affords of the general reception of the gospels as sacred books, there is nothing of a peculiar character. It is similar to that already adduced from Irenæus and Tertullian. I had just passed over Tertullian. For the confirmation of our argument I will read a few extracts from the evidence as supplied by this celebrated father of the church. Tertullian was born at Carthage, and here he appears principally to have resided. The dates of his birth and death are both uncertain, and he became distinguished as a writer about the close of the second century. No evidence can be more full and satisfactory than that which he affords of the general reception of the gospels, and of their authority as the foundation of the Christian faith. He ascribes them without hesitation to the

authors by whom we believe them to have been written ; and he rests the proof of their genuineness upon unbroken tradition in the churches founded by the Apostles. There is not a chapter in the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, from which he does not quote, and from most of them his quotations are numerous. "We lay it down," says Tertullian, "in the first place, that the evangelic document had for its authors Apostles, to whom the office of promulgating the gospel was assigned by our Lord himself. And if some of them were companions of Apostles yet they did not stand alone, but were connected with and guided by the Apostles." "Among the Apostles, John and Matthew form the faith within us. Among the companions of the Apostles, Luke and Mark renovate it." The gospels are always appealed to by him as decisive authority for the faith of Christians. The Evangelists and Apostles are placed by him, as they are by Irenæus and Theophilus, in the same rank with the Jewish prophets. In his time the scriptures, among which the gospels held the first place, were publicly read as at the present day in the assemblies of Christians. It has been calculated by one celebrated critical scholar, Andrews Norton, that there would be no fewer than 60,000 copies of the scriptures circulated in the primitive Christian churches, and the reasoning of this critic and divine establishes not only its plausibility and probability, but is strong presumptive proof that were there any things alleged in the four gospels which were untrue, there was the greatest opportunity and the fullest fair play for the men of that day to demonstrate the falsity of any unfounded allegations and statements made in these evangelical records, instead of which we find them going through the heathen world at that time unchallenged by any one. I shall make reference in the course of the evening to the celebrated controversy with the Christian apologists—between Celsus and Origen and between Porphyry and one of the other fathers, whom I shall mention when I come to that subject ; and then we have that celebrated apostate the Emperor Julian, whose testimony is strongly corroborative of the credibility of the four gospels. I shall now proceed with what Clement, of Alexandria, speaks with reference to the subject. In one passage he proposes, after showing that "the scriptures in which we (Christians) have believed, are confirmed by the authority of

the Omnipotent," "to evince from them in opposition to all heretics that there is one God and Almighty Lord, clearly proclaimed by the law and the prophets, and together with them by the blessed gospel." This affords a specimen of the manner in which the gospels are appealed to by him. In another place, in reasoning against certain heretics, he notices a saying ascribed to Christ, quoted by them in support of their opinions from an apocryphal book, called "The gospel according to the Egyptians," and commences his answer with this remark, "In the first place we have not that saying in the four gospels which have been handed down to us." Here in a few words he expresses his sense of the exclusive authority of the gospels as the histories of our Saviour, and the fact of their reception before his time. The gospels had been handed down to the Christians of his age—that is, the Christians who lived about the end of the second century. By Clement was preserved a tradition received from ancient presbyters of the order in which they were written. According to this tradition the gospels containing the genealogies were written first. The following providence gave occasion to that of Mark. While Peter was publicly preaching the word at Rome, and through the power of the Spirit making known the gospel, his hearers, who were numerous, exhorted Mark—upon the ground of his having accompanied him for a long time, and having his discourses in memory—to write down what he had spoken, and Mark, composing his gospel, delivered it to those who made the request. Peter knowing this was not earnest either to forbid or to encourage it. In the last place, John observing that the things obvious to the senses had been clearly set forth in those gospels, being urged by his friends, and divinely moved by the spirit, composed a spiritual gospel. Here we perceive the beautiful harmony of the four narrators of the evangelical history. Here we have Matthew, Mark, and Luke giving us those external matters incidental to events pertaining to the life and history of Jesus Christ, whilst John gives, as a German critic, Schleirmacher, says, the internal history of the gospel, and a profounder insight into "the deep things of God." In the second century, Celsus wrote against Christianity. About the middle of the third century his work was answered by Origen, who speaks of him as long since dead, and who evidently was unable confidently to identify him with any

known individual. Origen seems to have observed on every important particular contained in it, and has given many extracts from it. Had there been the least tendency in the early ages to suppress what was said against the gospels, the writings of Celsus, and Porphyry, and Julian could not have come down to us—but instead of suppressing them the fathers have had the candour even to hand down to us these very things which were written and said against them. It appears from the extracts given, that Christians, in the time of Celsus, had histories of our Saviour, which they believed to have been written by his disciples, and the genuineness of which was not controverted by him. Without mentioning their authors by name, he frequently quotes and refers to them. It has been observed with truth that an abridgment of the history of Jesus, corresponding to that in the gospels may be found in his work. He discusses the account of the miraculous birth of Christ, remarking various particulars related in the first two chapters of Matthew's gospel. He refers to the appearance and voice from heaven at our Lord's baptism. He alludes to the account of his temptation. He says that he collected ten or eleven publicans and sailors "with whom he travelled about procuring a shameful and beggarly subsistence." He calls Christ himself a carpenter. He speaks of his miracles, of his having cured the lame and blind, fed a multitude with a few loaves, and raised the dead; and argues upon the supposition that these facts really took place. He says it was a fiction of his disciples that Jesus foretold and foreknew whatever should befall him. He animadverts upon various passages in our Lord's discourses; upon his direction to his first disciples to exercise a peculiar trust in the providence of God, to observe the lilies and the ravens, gives us a quotation from the sermon on the Mount, "If any man strike thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also;" "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." He refers to the incredulity with which he was heard, and to his denunciations against the Pharisees. He speaks of his having been betrayed by one disciple and denied by another; of his prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" of the soldiers who derided him; of the purple robe and crown of thorns; and the reed which was put into his hand; of the vinegar mixed with bitter drugs

offered him at his crucifixion ; of his saying " I thirst ;" of the loud cry which he uttered just before expiring ; of the earthquake and darkness which accompanied his death ; of his rising from the dead ; of the angel who removed the stone at the door of the sepulchre ; of his appearing not to his enemies but to a distracted woman, Mary Magdalene, and others, and of his exhibiting his hands as they had been wounded on the cross, which last circumstance is mentioned by St. John alone. Here again we find in the writings of this opponent, Celsus, strong evidence of the credibility of the four gospels. I now come to Origen, that celebrated Christian writer and apologist, who was born about the year 185, and died about 254. There was no Christian writer whose authority was so high in his own time, and in the period immediately following. His works, of which only a small portion remain, were very numerous. He was eminent for his talents, and for the extent of his learning. Nor was he less distinguished for his piety, his integrity, and his scrupulous conscientiousness. He was also a careful critic of the text of the Septuagint, and of the new testament. In those of his works which are still extant, the gospels are quoted so frequently that supposing all other copies of them to be lost, those of Matthew, Luke, and John might be restored almost entire from his quotations alone, if we had a clue by which to arrange them. In speaking of the history of their composition he professes to give what he had learnt by tradition, concerning the four gospels which alone are received without controversy by the church of God under heaven. He says " the gospel of Matthew, who from being a tax-gatherer became an Apostle of Christ, was the first written. It was composed in Hebrew, and published for the use of Jewish believers." Mark next wrote his gospel, conformably to the accounts he had received from Peter. Hence Peter in his Catholic Epistle acknowledges him as his son Mark. The gospel of Luke, that which is praised by St. Paul, was the third, and was composed for Gentile believers. Last of all followed that of John. Elsewhere Origen says " We may then be bold to say, that the gospel is the prime fruit of all the scriptures. Of the scriptures which are in common use, and which are believed to be divine by all the churches of God, one would not err in calling the law of Moses the first fruit, and the gospel the prime fruit. The gospels are as it

were the elements of the faith of the church, of which elements the whole world that is reconciled to God by Christ consists." I shall not continue with reference to these early testimonies to the credibility of the gospel narrative. I have given as I have said from the very age of the apostles quotations from writers cotemporaneous with them, and then writers of the Christian church subsequent to them, thus forming an unbroken link between the apostles,—their age,—their times,—their deeds—and Origen; and here I come to meet what Mr. Bradlaugh told us, that we could not carry the gospels further back than the third or the second century—if I remember well.

ICONOCLAST: I said there was no evidence of the Christian gospels within 200 years.

The Rev. T. D. MATTHIAS: You say there is no evidence of the gospels further back than 200 years from the birth of Christ. I have shown an unbroken and connected link from the age of the apostles to Origen, and this might be pursued with other testimonies from Origen downwards to the present time. I shall now say a few words with reference to the Heresiarchs—the Ebionites and Gnostics, and their corrupted and mutilated version of the gospels, and shall read the reference made by the celebrated Irenæus to the spurious gospel of the Heresiarchs, "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those through whom the gospel has come down to us," and he immediately goes on and refers the four gospels to the authors to whom we ascribe these books—represents them as the most important books of scripture, and the scriptures he calls the oracles of God. "We know," he says, "the scriptures are perfect as dictated by the spirit of God." Such passages show the reverence in which the scriptures were held, and the feeling with which any corruptions must have been regarded—and they are likewise irreconcilable with the supposition that the gospels had but just appeared in their present form, and that previously those who possessed copies of these books had regarded them only as an article of private property, in which any alterations were allowable. If the gospels had been partly the work of unknown transcribers, the fact must have been notorious,

and no writer of whatever character would have ventured to use such language as that of Irenæus. Clement calls the scriptures divinely inspired, divine and holy books. He speaks of the four gospels as having been handed down to the Christians of his age, and he gives an account of the order of succession in which they were composed, saying that this account was derived "*from the presbyters of former times.*" These references I make are in contradiction to the attempts made by the Heresiarchs to palm works on the early Christian congregations. Tertullian manifests the same reverence for the gospels, as his cotemporaries, and like them quotes the gospels as works of decisive authority, in the same manner as any modern theologian might do. He wrote much against the heretic Marcion, whom he charges with having rejected the other gospels, and having mutilated the gospel of Luke to conform it to his system. This leads him to make some statements which have a direct bearing on the present subject. "I affirm," says Tertullian, "that not only in the churches founded by apostles, but in all which have fellowship with them, that gospel of Luke, which we so steadfastly defend, has been received from its first publication. The same authority of the apostolic churches will support the other gospels, which in like manner we have from them conformably to their copies." "They," he says, "who were resolved to teach otherwise than the truth were under a necessity of new modelling the records of the doctrine. As they could not have succeeded in corrupting the doctrine, without corrupting its records, so we could not have preserved and transmitted the doctrine in its integrity, but by preserving the integrity of its records."

ICONOCLAST : Mr. Chairman and friends : In commencing yesterday evening I drew my friend's attention to certain requirements which on his part would require careful attendance and observance. In the first place I told him that although the onus probandi lies on me so long as I alone was advancing any statement, that 'the same onus would lie upon him the moment he advanced any fresh matter—and it would lie upon him to prove his account as he went along. What he has now done we will dissect bit by bit, and without wishing to imply he has done anything he should not have done, I shall have to submit before you that I have not had

one quotation from the authors whose names he has given us. Now my friend must leave out some of the names he has given us, because they do not come within the issue we have laid down. I care not how many authors he quoted after A.D. 200—if he admits that the 200 years pass over without proof of the existence of the gospels, it is all I want. Those named as coming after the year 200 I shall not go into—as the breach is so wide without them, as to leave room for the argument I intend to bear out. You will therefore omit several names given, as they come after the year 200. There is one name about which there is some dispute, Tertullian—and as I denied that he could be justly called a father of the second century, as his birth and death were both very doubtful dates, and as my friend had my denial before him when he attempted to quote Tertullian, he was bound to quote something to prove the fact that he lived, and wrote in the second century. My friend professed to read from Barnabas, and to read from Clement, and to read from Papias—and curiously enough he gave the account of Papias in the very words of Paley—which I held in my hand; and after I had denounced, and proved him untrue. Now I submit my friend was wanting in carefulness when he did so, for at any rate he represented Papias as a hearer of John, when Papias said in his own words that he was not a hearer of him at all. Now my friend spoke of Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, as you would speak of Macaulay and a number of other people, whose writings we have the opportunity of knowing come from them. Has Barnabas never been questioned? Has the Shepherd of Hermas never been disputed? Are the epistles of Clement recognised? Are the writings of Ignatius without reproach? Are the writings of Polycarp certainties? My friend did not attempt to grapple with the fact that the writings of these very men were once put forward as genuine ten times the bulk they are at this present moment, that nine-tenths have been proved forgeries, and I do not admit the other one-tenth till he proves their genuineness. He should not quote from them without giving some explanation of this matter. I shall give you some more quotations, and ask him what he has to say in reference to these matters. In the first place my friend mentioned Barnabas. One critic in speaking of Barnabas, Hefele says this—and he has not written on my

side of the question—"If the epistle of Barnabas had been considered authentic by the ancients, it would have been read in the churches, as Augustine said of the Apocryphal writings, ascribed to Andrew and John, if written by them, they would have been received by the church." The epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, as may be conjectured from chapter 16. But as we have shewn above, that Barnabas was then dead. In chapter 5, the apostles are called "lawless beyond every kind of sin." The marvels related in chapter 10, about the hare, the hyena, &c., savour of some allegorising trifler rather than an apostle. Barnabas, who had travelled over all Asia Minor, and lived many years at Antioch, in Syria, ought to have known the falsehood of that which is stated in chapter 9, that the priests of the idols, and all the Syrians were circumcised. There are numerous other inconsistencies in the same epistle, and I go on in plain words to allege that the learned men on my friend's side, do not pretend for any authenticity for the epistle of Barnabas at all. With regard to Ignatius, "fifteen epistles pass under the name of Ignatius. Of these eight by the unanimous decision of the learned are pronounced to be spurious." This is said by Hefele, and endorsed by Doctor Giles, at the present moment rector of Bampton, near London. As to Clement, as Grabius and Möhler have both denounced the epistles of Clement, I will show you in a moment why they did denounce them, and you will not then wonder why they so denounced them, but wonder that any received them at all. Clement, who is put forward as gospel, speaks of the Phoenix of Arabia, which lives 500 years and burns itself in Egypt, in the city of Heliopolis. But do Clement or Barnabas mention the gospels? I say that whether forged or not, they do not mention Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John by name—whatever quotations they contain, they are only applicable to the supposition of the existence of another gospel, because they evidently refer to some sayings not in our gospel at all. I will not be satisfied with my friend telling me from Lardner, or Paley, or any other man, that they support the genuineness and authority of these gospels. He must take the particular epistle he cites, and give us his reason for believing it to be true, and give us the words themselves from the epistle, and then we will judge of the words. When we have convicted Paley of forged evidence, shall we take third-hand

impressions in these matters as evidence of the credibility or incredibility of the gospels? I submit you are not to do this for one moment. With regard to the Shepherd of Hermas, I was somewhat amused to hear my friend quote from him. I did not think in these days that any person who had devoted himself at all to an examination of the matter would quote the writings of the Shepherd of Hermas. "The Shepherd of Hermas," says the Rev. Dr. Giles, "is a contemptible train of allegories, and all that remained of their supposed author soon followed the lucubrations of the Areopagite. The Shepherd was declared to be a forgery, or, if not an intentional forgery, at all events to have been written by another Hermas, who lived many years later, and not the cotemporary of the Apostles. This fact is now no more disputed than the spuriousness of Dionysius: no one ventures to say that the work of Hermas is genuine, unless perhaps some solitary critic who, possessing more credulity than ratiocination, sturdily rebuilds upon a blind faith the edifice which the free use of reason had demolished." I, of course, should not apply such harsh language as this myself to my friend, but I am now quoting the opinion of a man who does not stand on the same ground as myself: and I may say more, that if you heard many portions of the writings of Hermas, you would cease to be astonished at the kind of critique here passed upon him. Hermas, as far as we can gather—for there is no certainty about it, and hence it lies on my friend to prove when he did live—seems to have lived at the end of the first century. He begins by saying that his foster-father had sold a young woman at Rome. Hermas recognised this young woman after the lapse of several years, and loved her, he says, as if she had been his sister. He one day saw her bathing in the Tiber: he stretched forth his hand, drew her out of the river, and said in his heart, "How happy should I be, if I had a wife like her, in beauty and in manners." This turns out to be the Christian church: and, a year afterwards, he is transported to the place where he had seen the Christian beauty, "who nevertheless was old: but she was fresh in her age, and was old only because she had been created from the beginning of the world, and the world had been made for her,"—and so on. This is one of the authorities we have had quoted. My friend also quoted Ignatius. Now, Ignatius, it is said, wrote many epistles, and this

Epistle which I am going to read, is equally reliable, and no more so, than the Epistle on which my friend relies—that is, neither of them are reliable, but if he thinks his reliable, he can, of course, quote it. “To Mary, the Mother of Christ, her devoted Ignatius:—You should console me a neophyte and a disciple of your John. I have heard several wonderful things of your Jesus, at which I have been much astonished. I desire with all my heart to be informed of them by you, who always lived in familiarity with him, and knew all his secrets. Fare you well. Comfort the neophytes who are with me from you and through you. Amen.” “The Holy Virgin’s answer to her dear disciple, Ignatius:—‘The humble servant of Jesus Christ. All the things which you have learned from John are true; believe in them, persevere in your belief; keep your vow of Christianity. I will come and see you with John—you and those who are with you. Be firm in the faith, act like a man; let not severity and persecution disturb you, but let your spirit be strengthened, and exalted in God your Saviour, Amen.’” Now, these are nothing more nor less than forgeries, and I ask my friend to tell me why it is, if there was so much early evidence in favour of the authenticity of the gospels as he says there was, that the monks and the priests of the early ages found it necessary to forge evidence at all? I ask whether it is not a fact that more than three-fourths of the early writings are absolutely rejected as spurious, and that there is considerable doubt in relation to the whole of them, and I ask him whether it is not a fact that the whole of them have been more or less questioned? I might go on, giving a series of laughable quotations from these authors, but I do not know that it is necessary to waste your time further at present. The issue which I have laid down, and which my friend has not controverted, is that before the year A.D. 200 we have no reliable evidence of the existence of these four gospels. My friend says we have, and that Irenæus speaks of them. My friend must prove that Irenæus lived in the second century. Dr. Lardner says he lived at the close of that century, and my friend must prove by some reliable evidence when he did live, and that the writings said to be his have some connection with him, and then we will examine what he says, and deal with it. My friend promised something more as to the genealogies. But before he goes on to the other fathers, as I shall be content to admit that after the

third century he will find all the fathers mentioning the gospels—as I am content to admit that—he need only confine himself to those which come before the year 200, and having overturned all I have advanced on that point, or supposing him to have done so, we come, then, to deal with the subject in hand—the credibility of the four gospels, judged by their internal evidence. On this point my friend has several other points besides the genealogies to deal with. He must explain these so called prophecies to which I drew attention last night, as falsely quoted and improperly stated—and he must deal with the flight into Egypt, and the time of the birth of Jesus, both of which I have quoted and brought forward as instances of incredibility. I shall now proceed to the next instance of incredibility, and it is the Baptism of Jesus which I shall give from the gospels. You will find in the 3rd chapter of Matthew, 13th and 17th verses, an account of the baptism. But, digressing for one moment, I wish to correct my friend upon a remark he has made, I have no doubt unintentionally, but he has most decidedly misrepresented the Gospel of John. He said the gospel concluded by verifying some assertion that John was the writer; but I have the gospel in my hand, and I am bound to say it does nothing of the kind. It is a matter easily corrected if I have made a mistake, but I cannot see a word in that chapter that would make it appear that John wrote it. I shall be glad when my friend rises again to show me if I am mistaken, for I am unable to make out the construction he has put upon it. We have in Matthew, 3rd chapter, 13th to 17th verses; Mark, 1st chapter, 9th to 11th verses; Luke, 3rd chapter, 19th to 22nd verses; and John, 1st chapter, 29th to 36th verses, an account of the baptism of Jesus; and I have first to point out this remarkable circumstance, that according to one of the gospels, John knew Jesus when he saw him, and according to the other he did not. Now, it is utterly impossible John could have known and not have known Jesus at the same time, and I allege this as an instance of the incredibility of the history with which we are dealing, and I beg my friend to examine it, and deal with it. And next, I have to allege that if, as the new testament states, God is invisible, that God is a spirit and is indivisible, it is incredible to suppose that as Jesus stood in the river to be baptised, the Holy Ghost was seen as it descended on his head as a

dove, and God from heaven said, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." I have no wish to press my friend too much on these curious mysteries of his religion, and you will notice that I have not pressed him on the miraculous conception of Jesus. I have passed over that; but, although I have done so, I require him to point out and explain the discrepancies with regard to the Annunciation, and their total failure of purpose. And now, my friend must explain that appearance, whether it was visible or invisible, and, if visible, he must explain to me what relation that bears to the Deity who is said by the book to be invisible, and how the indivisible spirit of God was divided and separated in three persons. I do not know in which way my friend will treat it, and shall therefore pass it over for a moment. But now we have a more striking matter than any we have hitherto had to deal with—we have close following on the account of the baptism, the temptation. But the baptism itself is not free from doubt in another manner—because of John himself, this very John, the very baptist who baptised Jesus, it is said, "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." In the 40th chapter of Isaiah, 1st to 5th verses, we find these words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed." Now, what relation does that bear to John? Not the slightest, and my explanation is that this manufacture of prophecies for the purpose of bolstering up a tale, shows that the writer of the gospel did not believe it to be credible, and therefore tries to drag in this prophecy, to impart an air of credibility to it. As I said, the temptation follows on the baptism. Immediately after the baptism, Jesus is led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. There he fasts forty days and forty nights. I have to allege

that it is absolutely impossible that Jesus could have fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and, at the same time, have feasted at Cana, in Galilee. John says, in the 1st chapter, and 35th verse, "Again, the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Then, at the 43rd verse, he says, "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, follow me." And in the 2nd chapter and 1st verse, he says, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus was called and his disciples unto the marriage." According to Matthew, there can be no doubt that immediately after the baptism Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. How are we to believe that Jesus was tempted of the devil and fasting in the wilderness, and at the same time feasting at a marriage in Cana of Galilee? Nay, more, will my friend tell me how he believes Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights at all? If he says Jesus did not fast in his capacity of man, it will be for him to prove in what capacity he did fast; and if Jesus fasted in another capacity, it would not be fasting at all; and, in the next place, the account that he became a hungered must be wrong, for if Jesus fasted in any other capacity it could not have affected him at all. But I deny that he could have fasted forty days and nights. It is barely possible that in some cataleptic state, or state of trance, a man might exist for a considerable period, but not for forty days—and that a man could walk about, speak, and act, and live forty days and nights without food is simply an impossibility. Now my friend has that much matter to deal with, and I have then to ask him as to the temptation itself, but as I shall not have time to enlarge upon it now, I shall not begin upon it. I shall direct his attention to the few matters with which he has to deal. He has to prove within 200 years persons who name the gospels. He has to prove that by evidence, not by assertion. He has to show that the account of the genealogies can be explained, by finding out some way of explaining that the three do not contradict one another. He has to show I am not right in my assertion as to the time of the birth of Jesus, and he has to show I am not right as to the dubious-

ness of the place in which he was born. He has to explain that if Jesus was born at Bethlehem, why he did not answer the Jews when they asserted that he was a Nazarene. He has to explain how John could and would not know him at the same time, and he has to explain how Jesus could fast and feast at one and the same period.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I am sorry that I must deal so summarily just now with my friend, and tell him that the first part of the statement he has made is a tissue of the most unfounded falsehoods. That will appear plain to you when you call to mind the doctor whom he refers to, who, if my memory serves me well, he spoke of when he last visited us as a clergyman who had written a book against Christianity. Then who is this Dr. Giles who contradicts Dr. Paley? Let us have the whole truth and nothing but the truth—it is a matter of the most serious and momentous importance. This is the book which I believe was referred to here before: it is the same one in your hand again. Now with regard to what is said with reference to the credibility of Dr. Paley and Dr. Lardner, as writers for Christianity, I demand something more than assertion with regard to Paley or Lardner forging any document for the purpose of making out a case. If Paley and Lardner have done this where is the proof? Where is the writer? And I challenge my friend to sit down calmly and patiently—to take time one of these days to confute Paley and Lardner, and thus win for himself a high name in literature. But now with regard to my quotations last evening. I quoted not from the spurious works he refers to, and has been reading, but the portions which have been sifted carefully and scrutinizingly. And, again, I did not quote from Dr. Paley. I have not consulted Paley, but of course Paley found his in the same work from which the writer did I quoted from, as we quote from Macaulay's history. I quote from it, and you do so, for we have it as a common receptacle for quotations. So Paley goes to the ancient authors, the same as the authors I read last evening, and thus it is that he happens to find in Paley the same quotation as the writer from whom I read—quotations from the writers of the Christian church. You will remember well these writers expressly referred to the four gospels. I commenced with the very age of the apostles, and from them

traced down to Irenæus, whom I assert lived before the second century. And furthermore, not only Irenæus, but Celsus himself, who wrote against Christianity, and made the references I made to the various incidents in the Christian narrative; he lived before the second century. One of the earliest Christian writers, I repeat, whose works have come down to us is Irenæus. The exact time of his birth is unknown, but he was born in the first half of the second century, about A.D. 125, and but just survived its close. I have given him proof, and I call for disproof. It will not do to assert it was not so. We have had nothing but assertions during the whole of the first part of his address this evening on this subject. Now, with regard to the extravagances to which he alludes, I have nothing to do with them; but even allowing this, I could give you quotations from William of Malmesbury, from Robert of Cirencester, William of Wykeham, and other writers of English history, from Mandeville and other of our English tourists and travellers in foreign countries, quite as extravagant; and yet, although these extravagances occur in their writings, we do not reject them, but we compare one thing with another; we get at the truth by comparing this work with the other, and this manuscript with the other. We say this is extravagant—this is true—and this is false—this has the air of credibility by being tested with other writings of that age and period,—and thus it is that our celebrated historians, Hume, Smollett, and others who have written for us English history have had to compare and collate these manuscripts, and give that which they believed to be credible—and thus with regard to the quotations made from the Christian apologists of the first and second centuries, I have given quotations not from the books to which my friend has made reference, and given quotations, but from those carefully sifted and criticised. Now it will be necessary to tell you with regard to biblical criticism, that during the last 50 years it has undergone a great and glorious revolution. During the last 50 years the neologists and rationalists rose up and attempted to destroy the Christian faith—beginning with Wolff down to the present period, they have attempted by various plausible arguments, and by various—I was going improperly to term them ingenious proofs, to invalidate the gospel testimony, and this has caused a sifting not only of the gospel text and

writings of the new testament, and various copies and versions of the new testament scriptures, but likewise the works of the fathers, and each work has undergone careful revision and collation. And the writers from whom I gave quotations are those who came forth from *the crucible*, and who have been pronounced credible witnesses, and firm evidence on the subject to which they refer. Now again we were told about the forgeries of the monks of the middle ages. That was but an assertion. What did they forge? what books? and where is the proof they did forge them? Assertions will not do. I will not take an assertion. I give you my proof, my quotation and references; I give you dates; I give you the exact words of the writers, and I demand the same candour in return. Having said so much, I can return to this subject when it is answered. In continuing my subject on the credibility of the four gospels I come to another point—namely to the monumental testimony, which we have in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It will be for my friend to account to us how these two Christian practices originated, who commenced them, and why and wherefore they were commenced. I give the account as in the new testament as to the way in which they commenced: That Jesus being baptised on the banks of Jordan,—baptism then received the divine sanction and commendation; that he when he had risen from the dead after his third day's burial and after his forty days' dwelling among his disciples commended them to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" that on the day of Pentecost when the gospel was fulfilled, the spirit descended on the apostles, that the multitude who heard of this were cut to the heart and said "What shall we do?" and the answer was "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"—and that day there were received into the church 3,000 souls. Thus we have the account given us in the Acts of the Apostles, of baptism by the apostles, their colleagues, and by the other Christian advocates and promulgators of the Christian faith and practice. Then with regard to the Lord's Supper, the account I would give is *that* in the new testament that Jesus met his disciples at supper—kept the passover with them,

brake the bread, poured out the wine, and said "this do in remembrance of me;" and the apostle Paul makes reference to it in the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians, where he says "they had received it of the Lord," &c., that as often as they did it they did it in remembrance of their Lord till he came again. We find the practice of Baptism and the Lord's Supper continued in the Christian church, and we find references to them in the fathers as they are continued to the present day. Now some of you have seen, and every one of you will have heard of, if not seen—the monument in Fish Street, commemorative of the great fire in London, in 1666, and as long as it stands, it is a testimony to the fact of the destructive fire in 1666—and thus I say that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are testimonies to the credibility of the gospels. Baptism commenced with John on the banks of the Jordan,—was sanctioned by Christ,—and practiced by the apostles and their successors from time to time, and age to age—never unpracticed. Wherever Christians have met and assembled these two Christian duties and institutions have been attended to in all ages of the Christian church—and I call on my friend if he denies this to give another account of the origination of these two Christian institutions. The onus rests with him to give disproof when I have afforded proof—and a variety of thorough proof. It has taken me years in searching into—and examining these copies. I would not tell of my inward struggles and conflicts in this matter—which were no other than to decide whether these four gospels were true or not. If not true I heartily desired to reject and repudiate them—but if true I rejected them at the peril of my immortal soul. If I rejected *that* which was the foundation of eternal life, what risk did I run? What madness and insanity would that be to reject the only grand life boat in human existence, that could transport me beyond the sea of life to the fair islands of the blessed? I say it is the duty of every Christian man,—of every rational being,—not to take things for granted,—not to jump at conclusions,—but to examine these matters, and after a most thorough sifting and examination of the matter, then to come to an honest conclusion on the subject. Now I shall just make a brief reference to the genealogies. I replied to it last night, and could let pass the reply thus made. You will find from the genealogies that they are evidently

taken from the archives of the Jewish nation. They keep them now as then, even as our British forefathers kept genealogies. The genealogy of Luke is that of Mary, and the genealogy of Matthew is that of Joseph. If you would bear with me for a little I could give you a most interesting transcript from a work upon the genealogies upon the walls of Palmyra by Mr. Harmer. "Genealogical tables were kept among the Jews with great exactness. Every person however of learning knows that the great difference in this point between St. Matthew and St. Luke, who have each of them given us a genealogy of our Lord, has greatly embarrassed the curious and did so early, but as in other cases what was at first thought an objection against the sacred writer has turned out in his favour, so doubly will this, when it shall be thoroughly cleared up." There is not a single apparent discrepancy in the whole of the new testament which either has not been cleared up, or will not be eventually fully and satisfactorily cleared up—for usages roll on and new discoveries and events occur in science and history,—in the discovery of antiquities and so on,—there flows around the Christian evidences an accumulated evidence. Time will doubtless do it. This inscription discovered at Palmyra, in the neighbourhood of Judea, is of the apostolic age, and when cleared up, it will also clear up this seeming difficulty. Mr. Wood observes that "the inscription is more difficult to understand than to translate, which appears by rendering it literally." Here is the Latin inscription which if you choose the chairman shall look at for your satisfaction, if any one would appear more satisfied by having it looked at by another person than by myself. So much for the genealogies. Now the next subject I have to deal with is the question of the annunciation. I must confess I have failed to perceive throughout the whole of the remarks of my friend the least inaccuracy or discrepancy in this matter. It appears to me that he has seen difficulties where none exist, and discrepancies where there are none. Is there a discrepancy when we are told by both the evangelists that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. One does not say at Bethlehem and the other at Nazareth. If they had mentioned two different towns, and two different times, there would have been a discrepancy; but they both mention Bethlehem. They both mention the miraculousness of the

birth of Christ; one does not say it was an ordinary and the other an extraordinary event. Here again there is no discrepancy. With regard to the invalidity or incredibility of the gospels, there must be something stronger than anything yet brought forward; for the credibility of the gospels is as a rock of granite, firm and immovable. Then with regard to the flight into Egypt. Matthew gives us the account of the flight, and Luke does not deny it or contradict it. We find in the gospels, that whilst one evangelist mentions a fact the other does not; but whilst he does not, neither does he contradict it. They write from four different points of view, and then we have to take into account the idiosyncrasies of the writers; they wrote independently of each other, and each used that which they considered necessary for the information of those for whom they wrote. Matthew wrote for the Jews, Mark for the Gentiles, Luke for a private individual, and John in reply to the Gnostic heresy. Here are four different objects, and yet all wrote on the same great matter—the life, ministry, doctrines, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Redeemer. With regard to the baptism on the banks of the Jordan, there again I have failed to perceive any discrepancy, for it is said by one of the evangelists that he was baptised in Jordan, and none of the others contradict it and say it was elsewhere. One does not say it took place at this date and the other at another, but there is a consentaneousness, a continuity, and unbrokenness when we take the harmony of the four gospels and compare them each with the other. With regard to the descent of the spirit, and whether the spirit descended or not, the symbol is visible, whilst God is invisible, and it was *the symbol of God*. The *essential God* is invisible. The very nature of the Deity involves this, that he should be invisible. As I remember well, one celebrated writer says—whose name I do not presently remember—now, says he, speaking of God, “Space does not include God, but God includes space;” therefore, the invisibility of the Godhead is that which is essential to the nature and character of Deity. Now with respect to this symbol, it was of the same nature and quality as that which was granted to the Jews—as described in the old testament—to be “the Shekinah cloud of glory overshadowing the mercy seat,” as a token of Jehovah’s presence with his people. He granted them that cloud of glory as their banner

through the desert; forty years it guided them, till at last they came to Canaan. We find the same token at the baptism of Jesus Christ, whilst a voice from heaven—from that invisible presence, and invisible and ineffable being—proclaimed, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” I see no discrepancy *there*, when you take into consideration the whole tenor of scripture truth and fact. Then with respect to the temptation, and the forty days’ fasting, and afterwards being an hungered, I was asked when I replied to this to state whether it was done as God or man. I conceive it requires no reply. Of course it was as man. As man Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, and can there be any incredibility in this? If God pleased he might have fasted 120 days. (Cheers and hisses.) “With man things are impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Is it not easy for him who made man, who made the world, He who is the great author of being, the great sustainer of existence, and the moral governor of the universe? Why the thing has not the least air of improbability about it when we consider the nature, attributes, and character of the Deity.

ICONOCLAST: I am willing to forgive, but not to forget my friend’s opening remark. I trust he will not repeat it again, because I wish to avoid any of that unseemly language which sometimes does characterise debates. I merely give him this notice to prevent any recurrence of such remarks. Now, my friend having said I uttered a falsehood should have shown it, but he did nothing of the kind. He told you I had no business to dispute Lardner or Paley, without giving some instances of their falsity. I have given one instance, and one is as good as a thousand until it is answered. I have given a positive falsehood with reference to Papias, and my friend has not ventured to contradict it. He said when I alleged works to be forgeries I should produce some proof. Now, I read a long list of works attributed to Justin Martyr which had been proved to be forgeries. My friend has mentioned a long list of names, but he has not mentioned the works he quotes from, and so given me the opportunity of saying whether I object to them or not. And now, with regard to Irenæus, first, he said he lived in the second century, and then that he was born in the second century and lived till after its close. If so—if my friend’s vague statement

brings him to the third century, I may put his works in the third century, and then his works are thrown out of the list. Now, my friend says that he has two or three pieces of evidence with which I must deal. He says that baptism is a monument of Christianity. All that I can say, if it is so, it is an ancient monument which existed thousands of years ago in Hindostan; and Sir William Jones will tell you that the religion of the Hindoos existed long prior to the time of Moses himself, so that baptism is very ancient. My friend says he has answered my objection to the genealogies. How has he answered it? There is a contradictory genealogy on the walls of Palmyra, which may be explained someday, and therefore that of Luke will be, and can be explained some day. If that is logic and reasoning, it is logic and reasoning which I do not understand. Finding we have three contradictory genealogies—one in the old testament, one in Matthew, and one in Luke, not any of which agree with one another—my friend says probably Luke took his from the archives of the Jews; but I am afraid we must have something stronger than probabilities to establish the genealogies in the gospels. How is it if there are archives which he says have so long existed that they have not been discovered long ago? My friend says he has answered the contradiction in the genealogies by showing that there is a contradiction in one on the walls of Palmyra, which, when explained, will explain that in the new testament, which I do not at all admit. Then again, how has he explained the fact that the genealogy of Joseph is given, who was no relation to Jesus whatever? Leaving that for the present, my friend says he cannot see anything inconsistent or incredible in the annunciation. What! if God sent his angel to tell Mary, Jesus was the son of God, it is not extraordinary she did not know something about it, and that she did not understand Simeon, when he rejoiced and declared him to be the glory of Israel, and Jesus, when he said, "Wist ye not I must be about my father's business." If the angel had appeared to her, and told her as related, surely she could not so soon have forgotten it. This is a discrepancy which requires some explanation. I shall have to tell my friend he is not so careful in his assertions as he should be. My friend says he cannot see any inconsistency in the accounts of the birth-place of Jesus, and that one does not contradict the other. Is there not an inconsistency in

Jesus being charged with coming from Galilee, and being taunted with the prophecy that the Messiah was to come out of Bethlehem, and to be of the house of David? If he had come from Bethlehem, and was of the house of David, how is it that he did not at once tell the Jews so, and relieve their minds from doubts? Then again, my friend has not attempted to deal with the manufacture of prophecies. My friend does not see any inconsistency in the accounts as to the time of the birth of Jesus. I think that requires some answer at his hands. He can see no inconsistency in the account of the baptism. He can see no inconsistency in a man knowing Jesus and not knowing him at one and the same time, than which nothing can be more inconsistent. Then he says Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights as a man, and immediately admits that he could not have fasted by the power of man, but that it was God's power which enabled him to fast. My friend is overlooking the argument when he deals with it in this way. If God interposed, and enabled him to fast, what made Jesus hungry despite God's interposition? I will now go on with the account of the temptation, my friend remembering he has these matters to clear away. Jesus being hungry, the tempter came and said, if thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, "It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." On turning to Deuteronomy, 8th chapter, and 3rd and 4th verses, I must charge Jesus with quoting scripture falsely when in company with the devil. It says, "He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* (and the translators have put in *word*, which is not in the original) that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." But there are other still stronger misquotations than this. I may remark that the offering of these stones to make them into bread does not appear a very strong temptation. To come before an hungry man and say, take these stones and make them bread, does not seem a kind of temptation likely to succeed. But the next is more strong: "The devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. My friend has had a revelation

about spirits : he tells you that God is a spirit, and that God is invisible, but Matthew says that Jesus saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and if he saw the spirit, then he cannot be invisible. But my friend no doubt rejects many of these things as I do, and I give him credit for so doing. Now, we have another spirit, the devil, who taketh Jesus, the Son of God, taketh him and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple—God's own house. Do I hear my friend allege that the devil has power to do these things independent of God ? that the devil can do it of his own power—for if he does it by the command of God, then is the whole thing a manufactured temptation, and no temptation at all. Either it is done in opposition to the Deity, or in accordance with the wish of the Deity, and in the latter case it was no temptation at all. If you understand that God made the temptation, and made the devil too, the whole thing must have been pre-arranged, and could have no effect. The next temptation—but I should say, that Jesus replies again to the devil by quoting scripture, and this time he quotes the 91st Psalm, and 11th. verse, and I am sorry to say that again I shall have to allege that he has not paid quite sufficient attention to the reading of it. It is a Psalm which goes on to say, "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, for He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Surely that does not apply, by taking the context, or bear the smallest allusion to Jesus or his temptation. The next temptation is a more extraordinary one, and one requiring much comment: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." I ask my friend to tell me where the mountain is from which all the world can be seen. My friend said when I disputed a thing I should bring some other way of accounting for it. For instance if you do not believe Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the four gospels, you must show who did. If I know some one who stole the watch from this table was not the chair-

man, must I therefore prove who stole it? (Hisses.) That is not logic, and I trust if the argument is so ridiculous you will leave it in the hands of your able champion to deal with, and if not so ridiculous you will not hiss him. I wish my friend to say which is the mountain from which the whole world can be seen—for I deny the existence of such a mountain. The devil pointing out all the kingdoms of the world says "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." I want to know if the devil had the power to give them or withhold them, for I say it is incredible if God is omnipotent for the devil to do this, and if he has not the power it is incredible that he would have made the temptation. It is evident that Jesus believes he has the power for he says "Get thee hence Satan, for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." On referring to the 10th chapter Deuteronomy and the 20th verse, I am sorry to say Jesus has not quoted the text quite correctly. I now leave the temptation in my friend's hand, and again draw attention to the fact of the fasting, and of its not only not being mentioned by John, but absolutely contradicted by him. My friend says John does not give any contradiction, but if a man says what takes place the day after the baptism, and the day after, and the day after, he shuts out the possibility of the temptation. The same with regard to the flight into Egypt. My friend said Luke did not mention it and contradict it, but I stated such facts that make it impossible that the flight could have taken place at all if Luke be true. I now leave the temptation in your hands, and draw your attention to Jesus immediately after he cometh out of the wilderness, he goes on a certain journey "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias, the prophet, saying the land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Now on reference to Isaiah, 9th chapter and 1st verse, you find this is an equal instance of misquotation—beginning in the middle of the verse, "he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a

great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Referring to something that has passed, and having nothing to do with the future, and not the slightest possible connection with the travels of Jesus in Judea at all. The apostle or evangelist who wrote Matthew, or whoever wrote it, has either invented a journey to fit the prophecy or a prophecy to fit the journey. And now for a little matter to pulverise my friend's granite rock, and if he can explain it, I undertake to make over all the other objections I have made and he can devote himself to this—no more confused with the difficulties of the Palmyra contradiction, he will only have to deal with the text to which I draw attention—12th chapter of Matthew and 38th verse: "Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered saying Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and then shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." I have to allege that Jesus was buried on the evening of Friday, and was out of the grave in the dark of Saturday or before dawn on Sunday morning, which only leaves the whole of one day, one night, and a little bit of one other night. I will read 27th chapter of Matthew, and 57th verse, by which you will see that it was the evening of the day when Jesus was buried, "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple; he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus," therefore Jesus could not be buried before the evening. If you should have any doubt about the evening, Mark, 15th chapter, 42nd verse, says, "Now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath," that is Friday. Then if you refer to John, 20th chapter, 1st to 8th verses, you will find "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark," &c., and in Matthew, 28th chapter, 1st to 15th verses, you find language much stronger than this. You find that Matthew says "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," &c., so my friends have only one clear day and one clear night; and to strain at the most, a little bit of the

night following to make up the three days and three nights. There is the sign, "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." I say that Jesus was not three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and here I say you have sufficient proof of the incredibility of the gospels. My friend says we are to judge these accounts the same as we judge the writings of William of Malmesbury and so on: I was surprised to hear a repetition of that kind of argument. Is it not true as my friend says that he was compelled to examine them with fear and trembling, because he knew his eternal life or perdition rested upon them? While these things are so it is wrong to tell me to judge them by the same standard as William of Malmesbury, or any other book—and whilst I have them as I have I am compelled to apply the strongest test and examine them by every test in my power. The next thing I have to submit is the miraculous feeding of 5000 people—and my friend must not say I have overlooked his monumental argument, for he must give us some other monument than the Lord's Supper, and give us something in place of baptism—both pagan monuments of high antiquity—before we can deal with the monumental argument at all. Jesus fed 5000 with five loaves and two small fishes, and 4000 with seven loaves. In the one case he had twelve basketfuls left, being more than he originally started with—unless my friend puts forward the theory that I once heard put forward, that they were twelve very small baskets—there was more left than the whole stock with which they commenced, and after Jesus had thus fed his disciples and the multitude, the matter makes so slight an impression on the disciples, that we find Jesus is obliged to remind them of his miracles, and reproach them with their want of faith—because they having had no food are complaining and he is compelled to reproach them. In one instance we find that the people had been three days without food, after which they were fed miraculously. It is absolutely incredible, for if Jesus had done this, the whole of the historians would have noticed it, and chronicled the event. I leave my friend to answer that, and I have to tell him that I find Christianity to be much older than he makes it out to be. In referring to Sir William Jones' Asiatic Researches, 1st volume, pages 240 to 260, &c., you will find the history of one Crishna, *not Christ* in the reign of the tyrant Cansa,

not Herod. Prophets told Cansa that there was one born who should aspire to the throne, when Cansa ordered a slaughter of male infants, and the parents of Chrishna being warned in a dream fled into Mathura, *not Egypt*, under the care of Yasoda, *not Mary*, wife of Ananda, *not Joseph*. Crishna was born of a virgin of the royal line of Devaci, *not David*. Chrishna fed multitudes by miracles, healed the sick, made the blind to see, raised persons from the dead, for that purpose descending into the lower regions, and ultimately ascended into heaven. I say that either the story of Crishna was stolen from that of Christ, or that of Christ from Crishna, and I allege that the religion of Crishna may be carried back at least 1000 years before the Christian era. I now allege that the only instance in which we need to dwell upon particularly in which Jesus raised a man from the dead, is that of Lazarus. There are three cases given of his raising from the dead, one of Lazarus, one of the widow's son, and one of Jairus' daughter. Upon the two last there are some doubts, and there are several reasons why I need not deal with them. But Lazarus is an important character: Lazarus was a friend of Jesus—but it is strange he is not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Our friend says Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote early and gave the events of Jesus' life, but that John wrote later to refute error. Curious this, and extraordinary that Lazarus whom all must have known and been acquainted with, is not mentioned at all by those who wrote the events of Christ's life. You find the miracle of Lazarus contained in the 11th chapter of John—and the facts in connection with it are curious. I will give you briefly the reasons why it is incredible. One reason is that there is no corroboration by Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or any profane author. Then the miracle has no useful purpose. The very people amongst whom it was performed did not believe it: no other writer mentions it, and the Jews and people outside never notice that Lazarus was raised from the dead. How many times does John mention him? Only on two occasions, and this man, this striking evidence of the truth of Christ's mission, and who should have gone with him everywhere a living proof of the truth of the gospel—this Lazarus is only noticed on two separate occasions by John, and the other historians never notice him at all. What are the circumstances? Lazarus fell sick and died—Jesus stating

that he slept—and ultimately he went and raised him from the dead. It is somewhat extraordinary and incredible that the sister of Lazarus who believed that Jesus was the resurrection and the life—which must have been a new doctrine—knowing that with God all things are possible, as our friend says, should have grieved—but Jesus comes and finds the Jews weeping and grieving for Lazarus who was to be raised from the dead. (Cries of No, no.) It will be for our friend to answer that, don't interrupt me.

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I have a quarter of an hour to go over a great many things. You will expect me to enter as briefly as I possibly can into each of the different questions, and mayhap I may miss a few, and if you think it proper I shall attend to them some five or ten minutes during to-morrow evening, or the following evening, if that is permitted. With regard to baptism,—*is Christian baptism* older than Christianity? I referred to the baptism of the believer in the name of the sacred three, and I wanted an account of the origin of that institution, and then I wanted, furthermore, an account of the origin of the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and I have not had it. With regard to the temptation—the triple temptation of Jesus Christ—it appears to me to have none of the air and form of discrepancy to which allusion has been made, because it is not contradicted by any of the other evangelists: it is stated by Matthew, and not contradicted by the other three. I expected, with regard to the discrepancies, we should have had pointed out to us different statements, such as that with respect to the genealogies; but now I find we are in another channel. With regard to the temptation, we know that Jesus, as revealed in the new testament, was the Messiah. The evil spirit follows him into the desert, and watches his movements, for it would be with him a matter of great importance to watch the movements of this person, upon whom the dove had descended. And by the way, the symbol of the dove. Jesus, it says, saw not the spirit, but the dove descending: he saw a resemblance of the Deity: he saw the token and representation of the Deity. Then with regard to the temptation, and to what occurred on the pinnacle of the temple. I maintain, this doubtless occurred to Jesus in a vision. If my friend understands the principles of hermeneutics, we are not to suppose

this took place strictly and literally, but that he saw Jerusalem pictorially represented before him, and there was, as well represented before Jesus—that is, before his mind's eye—the whole world, for the devil is represented as “The god of this world,” and “The prince of the power of the air,” so that there is not the least discrepancy, for it bears the same import at other parts of the new testament, where the devil is said to be “The god of this world,” and that he blinds the hearts of the children of men; even so here, it is said, he called on Jesus to bow down and worship him, and he would give him the kingdoms of the world, and the power and glory thereof. If I remember well, the next matter would be the resurrection. With regard to the resurrection, I presume that the Jews understood what three days and three nights meant better than we could. My friend has given us an English calculation for the Jewish customs and manners. We must remember we are dealing with Jewish documents, and therefore we must put ourselves in the *stand point* of the Jews, and look at it as a Jew would look at it, and, if satisfactory to a Jew, it must be satisfactory to us, as they are better competent to understand their method of computation than we are. You will find, on this question of the computation in the Jewish Camara, or Jerusalem Talmud, a dialogue between certain doctors of the law, wherein they speak of what is a day and a night, and they say, that if a thing takes place on the part of a day the whole of that day and night must be included; so that Friday and Friday night, Saturday and Saturday night, Sunday and Sunday night, must be included. (Applause, and hisses.)

The CHAIRMAN: I beg you to observe the notices on the walls

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: You do not like a satisfactory reply. We find that the chief priests and rulers understood this well. They set their watch on the evening of the first day of the week. They were Jews, and looked at it from a Jewish point of view. They put the watch at the end of the Sabbath because Jesus said he would rise again on the third day. They are permitted to take a guard of Roman soldiers, probably about sixty. They go to the sepulchre and inspect it, and find all is right, and the Roman seal is placed upon it.

They stand sentinel there, and during the night the miracle takes place, and they see the angelic visitant come and roll back the stone, and Christ arise. They then go and report to their master—supported by the chief rulers and scribes—that his disciples came and stole him away—from sixty Roman soldiers—while asleep; now, if asleep, they could know nothing of the matter. It is impossible there could be a more satisfactory reply to the objection with regard to the resurrection than what I have given. And then, with regard to the resurrection of Lazarus and its not being mentioned by the others. This is not a contradiction, that they have not mentioned what John mentions, and that John has not mentioned what they mention. Here there is no contradiction. And then, with regard to not being mentioned by other contemporaneous historians. If it was a fabrication, Julian, the apostate, would have been the first to mention it. It would have been the very thing for him, or others, to seize upon, if it had been a falsehood. But I repeat it, that Josephus, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, the apostate, and Epictetus, not having mentioned it, is to me conclusive proof that it is an indubitable and unquestionable fact. Then, regarding the miracle of the five loaves and two small fishes. I see no discrepancy there, for, in the one place, we are told where the miracle was, and in the other gospel, the event is not otherwise narrated. There is here no discrepancy, or I fail to see it. Here is a miracle—Deity, who has all power and authority, feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves and two small fishes: what is there impossible in this to God? What! impossible to God?—the maker of the world, and ruler over all the worlds; the maker of man, and governor over every man. I am here by the power of God. I am here by His power, who has all power—who is not limited with regard to power; and when you look at the miracles, they are small things when contrasted with the great architecture of the universe—when you look at the stars as they roll in their mighty orbits. We are all miracles—nature is a miracle—we are surrounded by miracles on every hand—and these miracles in the new testament are small in comparison with everything that surrounds us. (Cheers.) You must not do that. I am sorry that anybody should have hurt the feelings of my friend: we must deal as kindly as we can with one another. Now, you will perceive,

I am endeavouring to remember as well as I may, and trying to make up for my defective vision as well as I possibly can, what it is I have to notice and refute. With regard, then, to the quotations from the old testament scripture—and there was reference made to them last evening. You will find that these quotations are given as analogical to what took place with regard to the manner of the birth and with reference to the manner of the childhood of Jesus Christ—just the same as we quote analogies from various authors, such as Shakespeare, Milton, and others; so that that appears plain at once. You will find this excellently explained by that celebrated American writer and commentator, Barnes, who is as clear as needs be on this point. With regard to the quotations made from the old testament with reference to Christ, they are made from the Septuagint version of the old testament. It is not to be supposed that any of the quotations from the old are forged for the purpose of fulfilling the new testament, or the new for the purpose of corresponding with the old testament. The Jews had the documents of the old testament scriptures in their possession as the repositories of their faith long before Christ, and they are a standing evidence and witness of the truth of the new testament documents. Thus I have furnished credible proofs of the four gospels from the early writers, as well as from the monuments of the Christian church—baptism and the Lord's supper—and I call on my friend to disprove what I have proved, and to furnish counter proofs for the proofs I have afforded for the credibility of the four gospels. Again I call on him, if he avows Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not the authors, to say who were the authors. And then, with reference to the comparing of them with William of Malmesbury—I did not refer to them, but to the Shepherd of Hermas, the writings of Barnabas, and others, which have been condemned and pronounced forgeries.

ICONOCLAST : If my friend says, as he does now, that we are to judge of quotations from the old testament as we do quotations from William Shakespeare, then these are not prophecies, and all who pretend they were have deceived us. They are only passages quoted, as from William Shakespeare, which may happen to bear some relation to the subject. Then the whole argument falls, for he has not attempted to show that one passage I have alleged is not misquoted; he abandons the

whole, telling us they are quoted analogically, as we might quote from Shakespeare at the present day. Now my friend says, Jesus did not see the spirit of God, and I am glad to hear him say so, because I do not believe it myself; but these are the words of the text, "He saw the spirit of God"—Matthew, chapter 3, verse 16. I do not believe Matthew myself, and I am glad to think my friend has got into the same line of thinking. It is for my friend to make out his arguments, and not for me to manufacture them for him. Now my friend says I am wrong as to the three days and the three nights; and that these four books are Jewish books. Are they? Where is the slightest proof of it? The only attempt at proof is that the books existed in the Greek language, which was not the Jewish language at all. He takes the Hebrew mode of computing time; but there is not the slightest evidence of the four gospels being written by Hebrew writers—not an atom. But, leaving that, will my friend tell me how he makes Friday and Friday night, Saturday and Saturday night, Sunday and Sunday night out of this—*i.e.*, that Jesus did not go into the grave before the evening of Friday, and came out of the grave before the end of Saturday, and therefore did not get into the Sunday at all? Matthew is conclusive on this point: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene;" and when she came she found that Jesus had gone. I really do trust that we shall not be told these are Jewish writings without proving it, and then we shall not have Sunday and Sunday night dragged into the text, until he has proved that Matthew is mistaken in what he says. If you accept my friend's statement that Jesus was in the grave on Sunday, you have to reject Matthew. I am arguing for the incredibility of the gospels, and my end is attained if you thus reject it, and accept his statement. Now, my friend has, to my opinion, not only not improved his case, but has slightly damaged it. He says there was a guard of sixty men placed over the sepulchre. That is an error, or assumption, on his part. There is not the slightest evidence of it: there might have been only two or three for all we know to the contrary. My friend says, the Jewish Rabbis believed he would rise on the morning of the third day, whilst the express words they used are, "Remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again." There is a want

of care in his quotations of the bible, which should be amended in his conducting an argument of this kind. In my friend's argument as to the temptation, what happens? Not being able, calmly and reasonably, to urge the credibility of Jesus being placed bodily on the pinnacle of the temple, he says it was a vision. There is not a word to distinguish it from the verse which preceded it, and if that is a vision the whole is a vision, and it did not actually take place at all. Was the fasting a vision? Was the hungering a vision, and the whole not true? And if that chapter is a vision and not true, as it reads as a connected history of facts, then my friend will have to admit that the rest is visionary also; there is no break in it, and he cannot separate the one from the other. My friend says Jesus went into the wilderness, and the devil, attracted by the dove, followed him. The bible says Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Is it a vision, then, and is the statement untrue? If Jesus dreamt this, it will account for his misquotation of texts, for we cannot expect a man to quote well when asleep. My position is that the history of Jesus is incredible. If my friend thinks there is any other matter of which he can give an explanation, I will not shut him out from it, and he shall have any time to clear up these points. I have proved that the three genealogies contradict each other, and my friend has not disproved it. I have shown that one of them relates to Joseph, who had no connection whatever, as he was not the father of Jesus according to these books, and my friend has not attempted to disprove that. I have shown that, although God specially announced Jesus' birth to his mother; although she sung a hymn of rejoicing over that announcement, yet when she went before Simeon, she was surprised at what he said, and when Jesus said to her, "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business," neither she nor his father understood him. I have shown that the account of the baptism is contradictory,—that John professed to know and not know Jesus at the same time—and I have shown that the account of the temptation is inconsistent in itself. My friend says the three evangelists agree in it, but he does not show the possibility of John knowing and not knowing Jesus at the same time, and it must be taken that he could not. He says, in some parts, I have not instanced contradic-

tions—but if I instance discrepancies whilst treating the gospels, if I show them to contain inaccuracies and discrepancies, they must be incredible; for when a book is put forward as a work from God there should be nothing in it inaccurate, nothing in it incoherent, but all should be plain and straightforward. Now my friend has not mended his position as to this—he says the silent testimony of Josephus is to be taken. Josephus does what? Is he silent? He mentions John the Baptist in a way which shuts out his connection with Christianity altogether: and in the next place my friend admits two passages in Josephus have been fabricated and foisted into the text of Josephus, and if the fact of Christianity was so clear in the fourth century, what need was there to give forward a forgery when other works would prove it. I read the names of forged works last night, which my friend might himself have investigated if he disputed the fact. It stands before you not only that Josephus is silent, but that Josephus speaks too loudly both ways. He does mention events occurring at that time, in such a way as to shut out the probability or possibility of Jesus in connection with them. The silent testimony of Josephus is one thing—the speaking of Celsus and Porphyry is another. We have not any portion of their writings, we have only what Origen has stated concerning them, and considering what Paley has said when printing presses were known, we cannot say much for the fairness of another person when printing presses were not known. Talk of handing them down: it is a curious way of handing them down in the fragments we now have; they have been sifted with the iron sieve of prison bars, and thinned with the flames and faggots of the inquisition. My friend speaks of things being sifted: if we have any debate or doubts in our minds it is sufficient that Paley and Lardner are satisfied. I dispute this, and say that in affirming a matter he must lay the whole of it before us, and we cannot be satisfied simply because any other clergyman is satisfied with it. We are not to go to heaven or hell with Paley or Lardner, but we are to go on our own belief or non-belief. We must sift and dissect all the evidence brought before us. As far as I have gone, I submit, I have proved my case, that the history of Jesus as related in the gospels is incredible. My friend says I have shown nothing incredible in the miracle of the feeding of 5,000 with five loaves and two small fishes—and then had more left than

with what he began. If we applied the test to Milton, Plutarch, Tacitus, and other writers, we should reject such passages so soon as we came to them, and upon that ground I ask your verdict. It is possible in some words I may have offended some of you. I have carefully moulded my words to say nothing too strong or offensive: I have submitted the dry facts of the case—a poor advocate if you will—but I have erected a series of improbabilities which my friend must answer, instead of asking me to answer Paley and Lardner. He should know that many men have written on this subject, and that much that Lardner and Paley have advanced has been disposed of and confuted. I am not disposed to endeavour to answer Paley and Lardner, for in this debate I am arguing against that fabric which my friend will find it difficult to establish, and I submit before you as men of reason and intelligence that your verdict would be unanimous—it is incredible.

A vote of thanks was then unanimously accorded to the chairman.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1859.

PROPOSITION.

**"THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST NOT CALCULATED TO
BENEFIT HUMANITY."**

MR. JOSEPH JENNINGS, chairman: The subject for this night's discussion is "The Doctrines of Jesus Christ not calculated to benefit humanity." Mr. Bradlaugh opens the discussion by speaking thirty minutes. I have only again to request your attention to the notices on the wall.

ICONOCLAST: Mr. chairman, ladies, and gentlemen: The questions with which we are dealing, although divided into two parts, hang upon one another, and if it can be taken that I have succeeded in the early part of my position in showing you that the history of Jesus, as narrated in the four gospels, is incredible, then you will be obliged to admit at once, without reservation, that his doctrines cannot benefit mankind, because the whole of his teachings hang upon belief, and belief in that which is erroneous can never be of benefit to humanity: therefore, it will be necessary that my friend should well consider the whole of that which has been advanced, that if there be any point upon which he can say more, any point which he can clear up and make plain, it is necessary he should do so, otherwise, towards the conclusion of this debate, I shall comment on every instance of inconsistency and contradiction, of inaccuracy and discrepancy, in the history of Jesus, as a reason for rejecting his system of morality; because I put it forward as a proposition which cannot be disputed, that error cannot be of benefit to mankind when implicit belief in it is required at our hands. If

the history of Jesus be not true, it also follows that in which he requires our belief must be of ill and not of benefit to humanity. These are the points with which I start. It is urged that the position I am attacking this evening is the least vulnerable one in relation to Christianity, and men put before you, that whatever may be the errors in the old testament, whatever may be the errors in the new as far as any other points may be concerned, yet they are only such points and such parts as are entirely overpowered and overcome by the extremely moral doctrines taught in the four gospels. Is it so? Is it true that the doctrines of Jesus are so pure and so moral as to overpower any inconsistency, contradiction, or discrepancy to be found in the whole book? I submit they are not. But you say—Did not Jesus say, "Love one another?" is not that a good doctrine? Not only did Jesus say so, but many men said so, long before Jesus lived or wrote; and we can take it from these men without the impossible matters in which our credence is required. As it is as well to give you some authority for this assertion, I will quote to you from the philosophical conversations of Confucius, cap. 4, and verse 15, as re-quoted in the sacred book, page 103:—The philosopher said, "San, (name of his disciple, Thseng-tsue,) my doctrine is simple, and easy to be understood." Thseng-tsue replied, "That is certain." The philosopher having gone out, his disciples asked what their master had meant to say. Thseng-tsue responded, "The doctrine of our master consists uniquely in possessing rectitude of heart, and in loving one's neighbour as one's self." Six hundred years before Christ uttered these doctrines Confucius taught them. Nay, if you will have the doctrine of "do unto others as you would others should do unto you"—if you will have the doctrine "do unto thy neighbour as you would have that neighbour do in return"—you can have it not only from Confucius, but from Zoroaster. You will find these words in "Gate the 71st" of his "Sadder:—" "Offer up thy grateful prayers to the Lord, the most just and pure Ormuzd, the supreme and terrible God, who thus declared to his prophet Zardusht (Zoroaster), 'Hold it not mete to do unto others what thou wouldst not have done to thyself: do that unto the people, which, when done to thyself, proves not disagreeable to thyself.'" Nay more, not only did Zoroaster teach this several hundred years before

Christ, but the Jewish rabbis themselves taught the best of Christ's doctrines; and one of their rabbis, in dealing with this subject, begins that which constitutes the chief of their laws is "not doing unto others that which thou likest not done to thyself." I therefore have to submit that that which Jesus taught which was good was not new; and I have further to submit that, admitting a good precept, admitting two good precepts, admitting ten, if you will have it so, what are ten jewels in a mountain of earth if you are compelled to carry the mountain on your back in order to have the jewels? I submit that the gospels are a mountain of earth, and I ask you to reject the mountain of earth, which prostrates your faculties, and drowns you in your entrance to the future. I ask you to throw it off altogether, and I will tell you where you may find jewels, where you may bring them up bright and gleaming by themselves, without these religions which smother them, and keep them down in our path of life. Was the doctrine that Jesus taught "love one another"? How may we judge of that? It does not follow because Jesus said "love one another," that that is the prevailing doctrine taught by him. It does not come as a necessary consequence that love is the abiding precept which prevails and governs the whole of his teaching. I ask my friend to explain, if the religion of Jesus is the religion of love, why Jesus said "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me"? If my friend allege that which is not true, but if he allege that which is a most plausible answer that these words form part of a parable, I ask two questions—first, Why the translators have manufactured the preceding paragraph, mark, for the purpose of thrusting these words into a parable to which they do not belong? and, second, I ask him What do the words mean? Was it intended to teach anything? and if so, was it that those who would not have a king to reign over them were to be brought before him, and slain before him? And I have to ask how that is consistent with the doctrine of love as the abiding doctrine of the four gospels. I allege that the words in the 19th Luke and 27th verse are not part of the parable which precedes it. The whole of the parable is related in the third person, and after the parable is completed, Jesus says a few words to his disciples. In this case the words are as follows: "For I say unto you that unto every one which hath

shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Now I ask is there the slightest mark of a parable there? The parable that precedes it is related in the third person, and here there is a change and Jesus speaks in the first person. He has been picturing his allegory, and at the end he, as we may suppose, turns to his disciples and says "For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." It is a change of style altogether—"and when he had thus spoken he went away." And why need the paragraph, mark, be manufactured at all, and be fitted in at the middle of the sentence, if not to convey a false impression of the text. I submit that to be considered, because it is quite certain that if Jesus uttered that sentence, meaning it, that then his doctrine of love is but a sham and a pretence, and that my friend cannot rely upon the doctrine of love as any proof of the morality of Christ. Nay, more, you find in this book the history of one Lazarus, a beggar,—and this gives, in a parable, a good and purifying representation of the thing itself: that the beggar from heaven saw Lazarus in hell, that Lazarus cried out to him to put water upon his tongue, and that the beggar had not the inclination or ability to aid him. What is the doctrine of the new testament—and when I say new testament, I confine myself to the four gospels: "that many are called but few chosen,"—that is that few get into heaven, and therefore the doctrine of the new testament is that many go into hell. Is that a doctrine calculated to benefit humanity? And what do they go to hell for? For their wicked deeds? We shall see as we go on. A mother has a son whom she loves—loved from a child when it played and prattled in her arms. That mother goes to heaven, and the son to hell. The mother happy in heaven sees her son in hell, sees him writhing in anguish there. Could a mother be happy under such circumstances? And why does the son go to hell. Because he was wicked and dishonest? committed murder? or offended against the laws of his country? None of these things affect the matter at all. We are told in words about which there

can be no dispute—that belief is to be the matter which shall take man to heaven or hell—and the son educated differently from his mother, and not able to believe as his mother believed although a good son, a good citizen, and a good husband, would go to hell because he could not believe, whilst the mother would go to heaven because she did believe, not possessing the same cultivation and training as her son. Is it elevating to humanity to teach me this—to teach me the highest power I possess, the power of reasoning out, and of giving and receiving ideas—that if I exercise these powers I run the risk of eternal damnation, whilst for allowing this power to sleep altogether, I am offered the prize of salvation? If that was the only doctrine I had to deal with—the doctrine of believe and be saved, believe not and be damned—it is a doctrine which cannot be of benefit to humanity, and is one which is degrading to man. Belief is like a mountain weight, destroying faith, thought, and manliness—for manliness consists in thought and action founded on thought. The man who deprives himself of thought, destroys his noblest power and faculty; and if he say, “I believe in the unknown and unknowable,” he simply says, I have never stopped to think for myself. If I have proved to you that there are many passages altogether incredible in these four gospels—nay, even if there be only one such—the man who says, I believe that which is incredible, only repeats a form of words to which he attaches no meaning, or which he hypocritically professes to believe, in the hope it shall lead him to heaven. This is a doctrine not calculated to raise humanity. I shall not enlarge on the doctrine of belief at present, because there are many other matters which lie before, and deserve to be dealt with. My friend, I know not what course he will take with this subject. I am aware I am tilting against what he considers his granite rock. But will not the granite rock powder as though it were the veriest limestone calcined with the fire or crumbling in the water—will it not do this when I apply the test I have in hand? If Jesus be the moral teacher you say he was, tell me what this doctrine is?—Walking by the way side, he saw afar off a fig tree. He needed food, he was hungry, and went to the tree, although it was not the season he should have expected figs upon it. What did he do? It was unwise to go to the tree at all and expect figs; but he whose teachings we are to imitate—whose teachings,

my friend will tell you, are calculated to benefit humanity—finding none, cursed the fig tree, and withered it away. If Jesus were simply a man, then you have here a proof that he was not a man sufficiently thoughtful, that he was a man easily affected by his passions and feelings, and not a man whose thoughts and doctrines are calculated to benefit us. If, as my friend has urged, he is a member of the Trinity, he is divine—then, I say, it is an act of injustice. We can never believe in the divinity cursing trees for not having fruit on them which he has prevented them from bearing. I have further to say that the doctrine Jesus taught is not the doctrine of a good man at all. What was the doctrine he taught? Shall I deal with the sermon on the mount? that which is regarded as the least pregnable; against which, to sling a stone, will fall with the least force. Why it is called the sermon on the mount I do not know. One of the evangelists says it was preached from a mountain, whilst another says it was delivered from a plain. I will not urge much on that discrepancy, but will commence with the doctrine taught by Jesus. In the 5th chapter of Matthew we find these words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Is this good morality? Poverty of spirit has been the curse of humanity in every age and time. Where there are no slaves there are no tyrants, and, where men are not taught to be poor in spirit, there are no men to trample them to the ground. Poverty of spirit is a crime, not a virtue. Man should be self-reliant, true, and noble, carrying on his forehead erect the mark of that true manly nobility which entitles him to stand in the front rank among his fellows. He who taught man to reverently bow the head to old customs and influences, taught man that which did him more harm than thousands of years will be able to efface. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” When shall they be comforted? Tell me when? Millions of men bound down by tyranny struggle against it: when they mourned and cried, tell me when were they comforted in mourning? They who mourn will never be comforted, until, wiping the tears from the eyes that shed them, they rise against the tyrant, prevent the wrong, and thus prevent mourning in future. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Never was a worse doctrine than this taught to humanity. Men mourn

over wrongs they have not the courage and ability to redress. The strong man mourns not the injury done ; he redresses it. The wise man mourns not the past, it is gone, and the mourning is fruitless ; he mourns not the present, which is, it would be useless : the past yields knowledge by which he shapes his course for the future, knowing that every moment wasted in tears is a moment lost from life, which nothing can give back to him. " Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Poverty of spirit, mourning, and meekness following one another as though they were virtues. As the swell-mobsman apes the dress of the respected citizen, so do these vices trick themselves out as virtues in order to recommend themselves to the world. Poverty of spirit, mourning, and meekness. Meekness of what kind ? The meekness accompanied by poverty of spirit ; the meekness accompanied by mourning ! It is this poverty of spirit, and mourning, and meekness which makes the peoples of the world that which the next few verses would make them—*men who could not resist evil*. Is it good morality to teach men to be poor in spirit who resist not the evil which comes upon them ? I would say, in better morality, with the poet Shelley, when the evil comes upon you—

Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest, close and mute,
With folded arms, and looks which are
Weapons of an unvanquished war.

If the peoples of the world linked themselves together, with dry and keen eyes, watching the men who sought to injure them, bound together as members of one common human family, there would be no wrongs to mourn, and no evils to resist, for the few would never dare to resist, much less to wrong the many. I shall not, in the little time I have left, commence on a new doctrine, although in the present sermon on the mount I have plenty of matter with which I can deal, but shall recapitulate the matters in hand between me and my friend. I object that it is immoral to teach men that which is untrue, and I submit I have demonstrated as untrue several untruths in these books, therefore there is an amount of immorality to be cleared away. Next I submit love and slaughter cannot go hand in hand, and I submit I have made out a *prima facie* case of advocating slaughter against Jesus. I submit it is bad morality to take a few good sentences among a thousand ill ones ; and the few things which Jesus taught **which are**

good were taught long before him, and all he taught new was not good. I have to submit that that doctrine which compels men not to know, and not to think, but to say I believe that which I can never know, is not calculated to raise and benefit man, but is calculated to depress and degrade him, to make him a slavish automaton, and not a thinking, noble man.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I have two little if not three little matters to attend to before I attend to this evening's discussion, with respect to what was advanced last evening. The first appertains to the question that has been put as to John's knowing and yet not knowing Jesus at one and the same time. John knew Jesus as an illustrious teacher, but knew him not as the Messiah, until the credentials had been given him which the Divine being had told John should be granted him, and when these credentials were given, then says John I knew him, that is, authoritatively—to be the Messiah. So much for that. The next is about his being able to feast and fast at the same time: he did no such thing, neither does the gospel narrative say so. If you consult the text and context referred to in part by my friend, you find that there was a deputation sent from the Pharisees and Sadducees to ask of John who he was, and John replied that he was not the Christ. The next day John has a conversation with his disciples and relates what had taken place *when Jesus was baptized*, and the verse has nothing to do with John in the act of baptizing Christ, so that discrepancy at once is cleared up. It will be for you to consult the chapter for yourselves candidly and honestly—not taking anything for granted you hear from me or my friend, but searching and examining the scriptures for yourselves. "Search the scriptures" is the dictum of our Saviour, "for in them ye believe ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the scriptures to see whether these things were so, and let me implore you to do the same thing: take the book, read it and examine it for yourselves, and come to a candid conclusion on the matter, not from hearsay, but from a personal examination, and a personal scrutiny of the matter. Now when Jesus Christ was born on that eventful morning—I say

eventful whether you look at it from a Christian or a non-Christian point of view—I repeat it—that eventful morning,—it has been so to the world for it has revolutionized humanity. Behind Jesus what do we see? We behold humanity prostrate. Behind Jesus what do we see? Man chained, fettered, manacled, and degraded; despotism riding roughshod over all the races of our globe. Behind Jesus there is darkness, ever desolation, but that morning dawns, and ere the purple east is tinted by the rays of the orient sun there is an angelic song heard by the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain—and what do they announce with regard to that nativity in that humble shed,—that manger? “Glory to God in the highest.” You can have nothing for man unless you link it to God. I put that down as an axiom and a postulate which is as demonstrable as any axiom in mathematics, that you can have nothing for man unless you link it to God. “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men.” That is a fact yet: the world has since lived upon that fact. He grew to childhood—but I will not go over the narrative. My friend of course invites me to come to those points of the discussion again on which we have taken our stand on the two previous evenings’ disputations—therefore I come again to them, and I say from what I have shown with regard to the evidences for Christianity—and others which I have not mentioned, such as the heroic sufferings and martyrdom of Christians in attestation of *the truth*,—it is a fact demonstrable that Jesus Christ did exist; that Jesus Christ lived and laboured; that he worked the miracles which are said to have been wrought by him; “that he was crucified, dead, and buried, rose again the third day, ascended to heaven,” sent down the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and from that day there has been a continuous moral agitation going on in every part of the globe up to the present evening, and that moral agitation is the efflux of Christianity. What do we see in the foreground? Humanity rising itself up,—but I anticipate the subject. What are the distinctive features of Christianity as a system different from other systems, past and present? What is Christianity? Christianity is the doctrines and the precepts of Jesus Christ. Christianity is a doctrine about a person—it is belief in a person, and that person is Jesus Christ,—and all that is related of him, his

doings, his miracles, sayings, parables, and sermons in the four gospels has to do with Jesus Christ. He is the life and soul of the new testament. He is its sun and centre; he is the main pillar, and keystone of its arch. Christianity is belief in Christ, in whatever he has said, done or commanded in his name and by his authority should be done. He has taught—as we have been rightly informed this evening—to love one another. I was much struck by the remark that this was taught by a Jewish rabbi. It was the lawyer Jew who said so to Jesus Christ—you will find it in the parable of the good Samaritan. A lawyer, a shrewd and ingenious young man, comes to Christ—having heard much of him, that he a man of low extraction enunciated greater truths than the world had ever heard of before; he thought there was something so remarkable and distinguished about this individual that he would go and see him, and ask him some questions. Christ knew him to be a lawyer, one who read the book of the law and expounded it in the synagogues. The lawyer asked him the question “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why how readest thou?” said Jesus, and the lawyer replied “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c., and love thy neighbour as thyself”—and Jesus replied immediately “this do and thou shalt live.” With regard to the quotation from Confucius, will my friend prove that that teaching of Confucius was not derived from bible sources? That is the great point. You know that those great, and learned and erudite men who have explored the Asiatic records, are following up their studies, and entering minutely into these matters, and tracing out that these various traditions amongst the heathen theogonies of Asia have been derived from bible sources. And then with regard to the passage, how are we to know that that sentence was delivered 600 years before Christ? With regard to the Chinese system of calculation it has been proved to be based on false principles. They have a book which says that the world has existed for some hundreds of thousands of years past. Now we know that this is a falsehood. We know it must be a falsehood—for all authentic history goes back only to about 1500 years before the Christian era, and were it not for the bible, for the old testament records, we could have no reasonable belief in history further back than that. I repeat it again that the Indian and Chinese chronologies are based on un-

tenable, and false, and entirely unfounded grounds. But there is this again with regard to that Chinese dogma—which I believe was derived from bible sources, else they could not have had it—in the very nature of things they could not have had it—but what I notice is that it is deficient in one of the chief things to give it its sanction, to give it force, to give it power, to give it influence, and what is that? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” It is wanting in the primary element, in that which should give it vigor and influence, because as I have already stated you cannot have love to man, without love to God—the one is the impulsive power that gives the other its momentum, and gives it an efficacy to permeate the whole of humanity. Now again with regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ as it concerns true Christianity—I affirm all his teachings are calculated to benefit humanity. This is my stand point this evening; it is here that I take my ground, and upon this rock of granite, as my friend has said, I stand—that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity. In the first place, it is calculated *a priori*, reasoning from cause to effect. We take up the gospel documents, peruse them, put them by the side of all the writings, all the productions of other authors so called, religious authors and law givers in times past and present, and compare them with the morality of the four gospels,—with respect to their dogmas in reference to the several doctrines they teach, and when we judge *a priori* from cause to effect we at once rationally come to the conclusion that they are,—and only are,—calculated to benefit humanity. Now with respect to that golden rule,—you remember it is called the golden rule,—that moral maxim, if I may so term it, of Christianity, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” that other was spoken by the young man to Jesus Christ, and Jesus confirmed what the young man had said. These, now, are the words of Christ, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” Is not that calculated to benefit humanity? Has that any tendency to hurt, to injure, and degrade humanity? Has that any tendency to inflict the least injury upon mankind—“Do unto others as you would they should do unto you”? Then, again, with regard to the morality of the sermon on the mount. I remember reading a little while ago, of the influence that was brought to bear upon the minds of some Afghan leaders, when some of our officers read to them the Lord’s prayer, and

other portions of the sermon on the mount. These simple-minded mountaineers were struck with the sublimity of these doctrines. They were immediately conscious of their dignity;—the moral power and grandeur of the Lord's prayer, and other portions of the sermon on the mount, deeply affected them; and for my own part I cannot understand, I cannot conceive—I speak this with all due deference to another man's opinion, and belief or disbelief—but I only speak of my own simple convictions when I say that I can scarcely conceive the nature of the thoughts, reasoning, and consciousness of that man who can perceive nothing moral in the sermon upon the mount. Why the whole sermon is a moral essay from the beginning to the close: the object of its delivery was moral—each precept in it is moral—it is one string of moral germs—and, looking at it altogether, it is one of the greatest and sublimest moral discourses that was ever uttered by the tongue of man, or penned by “the pen of a ready writer.” I should like my friend, when he stands up next to turn to ridicule the sermon upon the mount, to ridicule purity of heart, purity of thought, purity of motive; for all *that* we find in this sermon upon the mount. I should like to have an open and frank condemnation of the whole of it. Just ridicule the whole now. But I remember one of the followers of Joseph Smith, in the town of Nauvoo—where, by the bye, many are anxiously waiting to hear the result of our discussion—I remember I asked the man what they believed, and he told me they had sent him to teach so and so, and other doctrines were to come when the people were able to hear them. We are told by those who have examined the history of ancient religions, that there were two classes of doctrines taught, the exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric doctrines were taught to the neophyte, until he was prepared for the esoteric, or darker doctrines and mysteries of those religions. Is that going to come yet? and, after condemning a few of the outworks of the sermon on the mount, is that but the exoteric attempt, and is there to be a further inroad on the grand sermon, so as to demolish its precepts with regard to purity of heart, and with reference to inward moral rectitude? Is it that the way may be paved for I don't know what? I remember reading of the effect produced upon one of the largest audiences collected to hear that celebrated orator


Robert Hall, when he burst out, "Good God, what are thine enemies about, when they want to put thee out of existence?" So I say, what are we preparing for when you take the Sermon on the Mount,—when you take the purest morality of the world, that which contains the germs, the fountal principles of morality—and denounce it? What is going to follow? I may surmise but I trust it may never come to pass—that we may never have a repetition of the scenes once witnessed in Europe, when a nation took and trod the Sermon on the Mount under its bloody heel, and when 70,000 were the hecatomb offered to the manes of the Sermon on the Mount in that distracted nation. Blessed are the meek. Are they not blessed? Why they are; man's conscience tells him it is so. It is demonstrably true, like a problem in Euclid. It strikes you at once as a self-evident fact that "blessed are the meek." They are consciously,—immediately,—evermore blessed. They are blessed in themselves, in all their relations, and in all the influence of their conduct. But is the opposite of meekness or pooriness of spirit blessed? I should like to know. Are those who are not meek blessed, those who are not poor in spirit? Nay, they are cursed. The experience of humanity furnishes you with proof of that. Can you say, blessed are the arrogant? Can you say, blessed are the supercilious? Can you say, blessed are the overbearing? Can you say, blessed is the despot, or blessed is the tyrant? No, they are cursed; but blessed are the meek. What is meekness? Turn it out in Walker and see what it says—gentleness, self-restraint. Blessed are they in being gentle, meek, and humble. Are not the gentle blessed? I am bold to think nobody would deny that the gentle are not blessed;—again I repeat it, blessed in their social position, blessed in character, blessed in life, blessed in that concerns this world and the next. Well, "blessed are the pure in heart." I have not heard that denied, and I must expect that before I make any reply. I am waiting to hear this condemned. I am waiting to hear purity of heart held up to ridicule and contempt—waiting to hear it held forth to our execration; but, whether it be so or not, again I repeat it—I would repeat it, if I could, in ten thousand thunders folded together—I would repeat it with more energy than the resistless force of the avalanche as it rolls down the gorges of the Alpine moun-

taips—I would repeat it in heaven and on earth: “Blessed are the meek, blessed are the pure in heart;” yea, blessed from one eternity to another, they are blessed in time, they are blessed for ever and for evermore. Of course, I must wait for the proof with regard to putting in these words in that parable referred to before I can reply to it. We have been told nothing with regard to the manufacture of the four gospels. I have given proofs of their being manufactured by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and I am waiting for proofs of their being written by somebody else.

ICONOCLAST: My friend and I sadly disagree; and the longer we talk, the wider does the divergence become apparent. He tells you, perhaps Confucius got his doctrine from the bible, and tells you that the bible is the most ancient book. I am quoting from memory from one of the most learned Christian authors, who admitted that the religions of Greece, of Italy, and India existed, and had communion with one another, long before the Mosaic era. I am quoting from Sir William Jones, in the first volume of his Asiatic Researches; and I think, after that, my friend must do something more than tell us we cannot go back more than 1,500 years before the Christian era. Anticipating a statement as to the time of the birth of Jesus, I have collected a few authorities on the point. My friend told you that Jesus was born in the year 750 from the building of Rome, and he told you that Herod died 751 from the building of Rome. According to three authorities, Tillemont, Mawe, Priestley, Jesus was born in the year of Rome 747; according to four authorities, Kepler, Cupellus, Dodwell, Pagi, in the year of Rome 748; according to five authorities, Chrysostome, Petavius, Prideaux, Playfair, and Hales, in the year of Rome 749; according to two authorities, Sulpitius Severus and Usher, 750; according to eight authorities, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrina, Eusebius, Syncellus, Baronius, Calvisius, and Vossius, 751; according to seven authorities, Epiphanius, Jerome, Orosius, Bede, Salian, Sigonius, and Scaliger, 752; according to three authorities, Alexander Dionysius, Luther, and Lahbæus, 753; according to Herwart, 754; to Paul of Middleburgh, 755; and Lydiat, in the year of Rome 756. Thirty-five authorities, of the most orthodox schools, here differ among themselves

ten years about the era of the grandest preternatural event in human annals, which event is, in itself, dependent in epoch upon the implied accuracy of a date—*Anno Urbis Condita*, the “year of the building of Rome;” that, in his next pages the Rev. Dr. Hales shows to be fluctuating, according to six dates, established by thirty-four chronologists, between the assumed year B.C. 753 and B.C. 627. However, avers the Rev. Dr. Horne, “The true date of the birth of Christ is four years before the common era, or A.D.” Archbishop Newcome could say, “Jesus was born, says Lardner, between the middle of August and the middle of November, A.U.C. 748 or 749. We will take the mean time, Oct. 1.” John of Spain says, “That there has been sought in what season of the year, in what month, and on what day our Saviour was born: some place this birth at the winter solstice; others at the equinox of autumn, or at the equinox spring.” And again, Bossuet, one of the most enlightened men of his age, winds up his chronological investigations as follows “Birth of Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary: it is not agreed as to the precise year when he came into the world, but it is agreed that his true birth precedes by some years our vulgar era. Without disputing further upon the era of the birth of our Lord, it suffices that we know it happened in the year 4000 of the world.” If we enquire the age of Jesus at his death Bossuet tells us that “According to Matthew he was 33 years old, to Pagan legend 21, to Bossuet 40.” “Common Christians,” as the Rev. Dr. Hitchcock designates them, may start back in amazement at these results upon the year of the Saviour’s birth, which the first slashes of an archæologic scalpel have now laid bare. Mystified by childlike or fraudulent authorities, they may or may not be grateful for the truth; but their conscientiousness will hereafter whisper to their minds, that it is safest perhaps to become more charitable towards men of science; whose unwearied struggles to arrive at a chronology are superinduced by acquaintance with these facts. In the meanwhile readers of Strauss and Hennell know why the settlement of the year of Jesus’s nativity is one of those things not to be looked for, because as Scaliger wrote—“to determine the day of Christ’s birth belongs to God alone, not to man.” I trust my friend will be a little more careful in his chronological quotations. And when he speaks of the

Hebrew writings and records being the most ancient in the world, he merely says he has not studied the matter as he should do, because it is easy to see that the Hebrew chronology and Hebrew writings and writers are amongst the most modern of ancient chronologies and writers. This is a matter which may be easily demonstrated, and it is evident it is so, or else Sir William Jones would have grossly lied when he said that the peoples and religions of Greece, Italy, and India existed and had correspondence with one another before the Mosaic era. My friend has again spoken of the crucifixion of Jesus, and has again spoken of his rising on the third day, forgetting that these are matters he has not proved—and the latter of which I alleged as a contradiction, because the words of Jesus and the facts disagree: my friend has not proved that Jesus was in the earth three days and three nights. But, as he has referred to the crucifixion, I will show you something in relation to that crucifixion, which, if I mistake not, will much surprise you. In the first place, I hold in my hand a pictorial book, not issued by any infidels, or men who dreamed it would be applied to infidel purposes—in which book there are many plates of various hieroglyphic inscriptions on the pyramids and obelisks of Egypt—and I doubt not my friend will admit that the hieroglyphic age was long prior to the age of writing. We have, in figure 1, the form of a cross, and in figure 22, we have two forms of Egyptian crosses. The form of the Egyptian cross is somewhat different from our own. Instead of being one cross-piece and another piece straight down, where the one piece of wood crosses the other it comes into a kind of loop—

thus, ; but sometimes it is not so. In figure 1, we have exactly the form of cross seen on the top of Roman Catholic churches and chapels. But it might be urged this was not the usual Egyptian cross, which was a different figure, and had nothing to do with the Christian cross. Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson has discovered on an orthodox Christian church, the following inscription:—

KAΘO[†]ΛIKH + EKKΛH[†]CIA

OR,

CATHO[†]LIC + CHU[†]RCH.

Of the three crosses, two are in the Egyptian form, with the loop over the intersection of the cross—crosses which existed before the age of writing, extending into the age of hieroglyphics. I have many cases which I have marked, and could show, in which these crosses occur; but I shall not enlarge upon them to any great extent, because one matter unanswered is as good as a thousand. This cross repeatedly occurs in the monuments and idols of Egypt. We have here a sarcophagus and a sphynx, on which the figure of this cross also occurs. In the other figure, the cross is held over the lips of a man who seems on his death-bed, and to this man the priest is offering the cross on his dying day. I urge upon you, as reasoning men, you are compelled to reject the whole of this story of Christ, for the simple reason that my friend has had a night to consider and has not ventured to dispute the tale of Crishna I laid before you. I have shown that there existed a religion apparently the same as ours, as I allege, 1,000 years before the Christian era. The Brahmins claim a higher antiquity for their religion, and why should not they have the same claim to belief and authority as the priests of the Christian religion? My friend has not grappled with the most important of the contradictions I put before you. He has not, as I have repeatedly observed, shown Jesus to have been three days and three nights in the earth; and in putting before you a contradiction of John knowing and not knowing Jesus at the same time,—he tells you John did not know him in his character of Messiah, but knew him otherwise. John says he knew him not, and I know no more than John tells me; and when I find John saying this, I have to remind my friend of the text that whoso addeth to or taketh from this book shall lose his part out of the book of life, or have the plagues thereof added unto him. I won't say whether or not his is a just explanation, because, as he gives it, it leaves numerous contradictions untouched. Look at the character of the explanations my friend has given, when he made a portion of the account of the temptation into a vision or dream to suit his purpose for the time or moment, yet gravely treated the remainder of the same account as that of a real occurrence. My friend says I am wrong in stating the feast at Cana of Galilee to have taken place at the time of the temptation; but I still rely upon it, and upon the other

matters I have advanced, leaving the texts for your examination in dealing with the question of credibility. Then again, what has my friend shown? Has he shown that a man can believe as he will, and that he can will to believe, even in opposition to organization, education, and surrounding conditions—that a man can play fast and loose with his belief—put it off as easy as his coat, and be relieved from its exercise altogether? Has he shown what the words “But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me” mean? It is not for me to prove they are or are not part of the parable. I allege them to be the words of Jesus, and it is for my friend, if he attach a different meaning to it, to show what it should be, and why it should be so attached. I say, that whether they be part of the parable or not, they are still the words and command of Jesus, and they are not calculated to do good to mankind. I ask him to explain that to you. Now, my friend has referred to a time when those whom, he says, put the gospel underfoot erected a bloody monument to the memory of that deed. I felt pained for a moment, and then the pain passed away;—I felt pained that one possessing the abilities of my friend should thus go to one of the weakest arguments, when thousands stronger lie around. If I had asked for a text he could not have given me a clue to better doctrine than by pointing out a nation who, priest-ridden for years—taught to be humble, taught to be poor in spirit, taught to mourn and be comforted, taught to be meek and they should inherit the earth, taught all this for years, and finding out the deceit practised upon them, rose up in the agony of the moment; and then, who can wonder that these men, priest-taught and therefore ill-taught, priest-ridden and therefore ill-developed—these men, badly educated and doubly wronged, should, in the excitement of passion, do that which, if well taught, they would never do or try to do? I deny the count of the indictment he raises: I deny that the murders resulted from the rejection of the book, and I deny next that the murders were so many as he says; but that won't much affect the question, because, if only one, it would be a fair matter of comment: but my friend should not overstate his argument. Now, let us go a little more into the subject in hand. My friend has not shown that poverty of spirit is a virtue. He has not shown it is right to

mourn ; but has gone to meekness and purity of heart. But mark, what is the use of telling a man to be pure in heart, if at the same time you impose other conditions which prevent the purity of heart. My whole allegation is that the general teaching of Jesus is such that it prevents purity of heart and morality. My friend asserts that the sermon on the mount is one continued tissue of moral precepts: that is the very question we are debating, and my friend's assertions go for nothing unless he overthrow the allegations I make. My friend says Jesus—at least, so I understood him to say—gave us, as original teaching, the words, “Do unto others as you would others should do unto you.” That was not original on the part of Jesus, but was taught long before, as I have shown. I will now proceed with my comment on the sermon on the mount. In passing any texts, do not let my friend allege that I pass these texts clandestinely, or with a view to put a false appearance upon you. Hundreds of clergymen are reiterating texts they consider good or useful; and in the time we have, I only make out the strongest case I can against the gospels I am dealing with, and if my friend wants to rebut it, it is for him to rebut it. I can only make out my own case, and not supply him with his at the same time. My friend told you how the bible had influenced some Afghan chiefs, but we need not go to Afghanistan for instances, for in our own sister country—in Scotland—we had an example last week of the effect of the sermon on the mount, which says, “If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” In Scotland, as is well and thoroughly testified, a poor woman, the week before last, who had been affected by the revival movement, fancied that her right eye offended her and tried to pluck it out, and that her right hand had offended her and sought to cut it off. They took the poor woman to a lunatic asylum, when she endeavoured to bite the hand off. She then had a straight jacket put on, and bitterly she reproached them, and told her keepers she must go to hell, because her hand had offended her, and Jesus told her she must go to hell if it was not cut off. This is an anecdote as a set off against the Afghan chiefs, and it has the misfortune to be nearer home, both as to place, time, and people. But I ask is it good morality to teach that if the

eye offend, you must pluck it out, or if the hand offend, you must cut it off, for it is better that these should perish than the whole body be cast into hell? My friend will no doubt tell you it is to be read allegorically, but I cannot imagine any moral system, which would require you to pluck out your right eye, or leave you to go to hell with both. Do you imagine that your hand, your eye, or your leg has power to offend without the remainder of the body? My friend will say it is allegorical—then let him say what does it mean, how much is allegorical, how much literal, and why does not Jesus—who, if my friend's theory be true, is God himself—why does not he speak to all nations in such a language that a poor ignorant woman should not misapprehend him, and have to be confined in a lunatic asylum through a misapprehension of his command? But I have a stronger allegation to bring against this sermon on the mount, and I have to allege that if Jesus ever taught that which it is said he taught here, that then he designedly sought to lower humanity. I, myself, honestly and candidly confess, that I believe the teachings put into this chapter not to be the work of any good man, of any moral reformer, but I believe them to be the work of some men who have sought to bind down humanity, because I find it teaching this—"Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith. Therefore take no thought saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought

for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Take no thought for the morrow. But perhaps my friend will say I am somewhat misrepresenting—and that if properly translated it means "no anxious thought." If there is a mistranslation in this precept, tell me how many precepts they have not mistranslated? and tell me if it be true, as the Unitarians allege, there are 130,000 different readings of these four gospels? and if so, do not some of the vital points of faith become affected by these 130,000 readings? But does it mean no "anxious thought?" What illustrations does Jesus give? The lilies of the field! He therefore means take no more thought for the morrow than the lilies, and says seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you. Never was a doctrine more calculated to degrade mankind, than this which I place before you in all its monstrosity. Teaching poverty of spirit, which prevents you from rebelling against any wrong, or any injury: then mourning and weakness which leads you to hope to inherit the earth, while men are defrauding and robbing you of it now; and then take no thought for the morrow, but to hope, and watch, and pray, for ye know not in what hour the Son of Man may come. I tell you these doctrines of taking no thought for the morrow are so destroying and crushing to human effort, that they want but setting before you to make their monstrosity apparent. If men took no thought for the morrow the very hall in which we stand, and the very books from which I read would have no existence. Take no thought for the morrow—why the very Christians themselves if they build a church or chapel take thought for many a year—nay more, themselves atheists in practice, take thought against their God, and place lightning conductors on the steeple, lest God himself should without thought allow his thunder storms to shatter the building about their ears. They know that by taking thought for the morrow they may prevent this. They know that lightning is the result of natural conditions. They know that whether there is a God or not they have to deal with natural conditions which they thus try to resist, control, or mould to their own purposes—and so they despise the precept they preach, they despise their theory, and in practice give the lie to that which from their pulpits they urge to be God's own words and truth. I urge before you that the doctrine, take no

thought for the morrow, has been enough to crush man, and with faith is enough to bind him down and keep him down.

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS : The last shall be first,—and now with regard to the taking no thought for the morrow, if my friend would but study a little archæology, he might easily have understood the answer to that. I lately read in a life of Lord Bacon, that he died of thought—the word thought in the reign of James I. being understood to mean “anxiety.” The passage therefore means ‘take no anxiety for the morrow,’ which at once demolishes all he has spoken against it. (Laughter.) I have spoken a great fact (A voice—Proof.) I have given proof from Lord Bacon’s life : it is proof sufficient on that point. With regard to that nation to which I referred, I am glad to come back to it again. My friend has carried me backwards to the reign of James II., when from the bosom of that nation was driven forth a people like ourselves, who took “the book,” read it and understood it, and evolved out its principles for themselves, without being fettered or chained by the hands of the priesthood. They were not permitted to do so long, they left their land, and *here* they found a welcome home, here they found a favourable soil, amongst men and women of their own Christian tendencies and principles, and from that hour to the present the British nation has been rising because of her Christianity, and because of her freedom. For I must tell you once for all I believe not in intolerance—I detest it. Toleration I do not claim from any man, for what right has any man to tolerate another, each man being equal in the eyes of his Creator. That was the principle which drove them from France, which principle was crushed there, and there at last was the bitter fruit engendered by the crushing down of mind, which being restrained on this hand, rushes to the other extreme, and what was the consequence ? Why time would fail me to recount to you the events which succeeded the publication of the writings of those—I am sorry I cannot call them celebrated men, no stretch of charity will enable me to do so—because the deeds which emanated from them are far from being so. But at last that nation reaped the fruit of these poisonous productions—and they drank it in wormwood and gall, yes ! they drained the dregs of that bitter cup, when there came at last a happy breathing time to Europe, and the dark cloud passed away. Now I return

again to our subject—with regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ. He taught meekness; he taught poverty of spirit; he taught blessed are they that mourn, and so on, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness—and did he act contrary to his teachings? What did his conduct say when he hung upon that cross where his enemies had uplifted him, where they had nailed him; where they had lifted him up between earth and heaven, a spectacle to men, to devils, and angels? When they fastened him there for the promulgation of truths he had enunciated in life, and uttered against him the most malevolent speeches that their black and fiendish hearts could concoct; when the infuriated multitude were rallying around his cross, uttering their horrid blasphemies and execrations against him, what were his dying words? “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,”—thereby not only teaching what should be done—teaching not by word merely but by example and conduct. There you have the exhibition of a perfect moral teacher, who teaches in his doctrines what he afterwards exhibits and illustrates in his life and conduct, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Again I repeat with regard to the passage quoted “But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me,” it is a quotation from a parable, which is nothing at all to the point. We have to do this evening with the teachings of Jesus; with that which he has taught mankind to do as a moral duty. In the first place he begins at the root; he lays the axe at the root of the tree. And here I pursue our *a priori* argument, with regard to Christianity being calculated to benefit humanity. All true moral teaching must begin with first principles; and beginning with them must begin with the first springs of thought, the first emotions of the mind—it must take hold there, because if it begins further on it is left without its fulcrum, that which is necessary to give it a moving force and influence. And herein is Jesus Christ distinguished from all other teachers, before or since, that he invariably takes hold of man’s inner nature. This is what he requires. You remember his remarkable denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, that they merely cleansed the outside of the platter or dish; that they took care to have a decent outside and exterior—fair and plausible to man externally, whereas inwardly they were ~~as~~ wolves,

sepulchres full of dead men's bones, and rottenness; inwardly nothing but deceit and malice and envy, and all the hideous germs of vice festering in their wicked and malevolent minds. Jesus knew what was in men. He fearlessly denounced these hypocrites, to their faces, in their presence and in the presence of the multitude, and told them that for them there was woe, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," because they affected this outward demeanour and behaviour, whilst inside they were what he represented them to be, arrant knaves and hypocrites. But what does Jesus teach? He teaches us to begin with the inward, the same as that celebrated American author Emerson says at the commencement of "Representative Men,"—"Man is like that noble indigenous plant the palm tree, which grows from the inward to the outward." Thus Jesus begins with the inward. He begins with the inner principle, with the germ of life, and there is planted the seed of virtue, there is it sown in the good soil, and there it springs up and grows into all the beautiful Christian virtues. Thus we find again and again in his Sermon on the Mount, and his parables to the Jewish people, the necessity of heart purity, the necessity of soul holiness and rectitude, inculcated, taught and enforced. They are not to permit the angry thought—not only the angry look, not only the angry word, but they are not to harbour the angry thought. Not only not to express themselves bitterly, not only not to express themselves malevolently, but they are to expel from the heart and extirpate from the soul every evil passion, thought, and imagination; everything that is evil, everything that is wicked, everything that is vicious. Jesus all throughout his teaching seeks to cleanse the core of man's inner life, so that there might be a pure and perfect man. There is that golden precept "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." There is a standard of morality!—the highest, the greatest, the deepest, the vastest conceivable, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." The perfection is to extend to the whole sphere of man's life. It is not to be a partial morality; not a half and half purity: it is to be a purity entire and thorough: it is to be a purity commensurate with all man's relations, and with all man's influence. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Then with regard to the faith to

which reference has been made. For my own part I did not expect that that would be brought forwards in such a way as to condemn faith in Christianity, for he condemns that which is most natural, most instinctive to man. Faith, it is the very basis of our national existence; it is the very basis and groundwork of our social relations. Faith, why what could we do without faith I should like to know? Faith, why we do all we do in faith, and by faith, and through faith—and provided you bring into a family the opposite principles to faith what do you do? You disunite it and throw into it the elements of discord, Where there is no faith in father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife, master and servant, what have you in that family? You can picture such a family without faith: there will be no good works there. You cannot have a tree without roots, and you will as soon see a tree grow without roots as expect any good from a family, a neighbourhood, district, or nation, or the world, where faith is banished from that family, district, nation, or world. Faith, I repeat it, is the very basis on which society is built. What could we do without commercial faith? What could we do without political faith? What could we do without our national faith? I speak now of secular national faith. You cannot do without faith; and the man that condemns faith should think a little before he speaks: he should pause ere he condemns faith; because if he condemns faith as an element in Christianity on principle, he must be first of all prepared to deny the necessity and importance of faith in every other department of human life, and every sphere of human conduct. It is from faith that good works spring, as their natural efflorescence and fruitage. We begin with faith, and when we have faith we have the germs of good deeds. Of course I speak not now of that barren faith which the bible condemns, of that faith which is unproductive of good and beneficial results—this the bible reprobates, and says faith without works is dead. It says faith is not genuine, but is spurious, unless attended by these good works which evidence its being faith of a good, right, and true character. Jesus Christ stood forth before the world as an illustrious teacher, as a teacher of new and heaven-sent truths: he stood before the world, as Thomas de Quincey beautifully styles him, as “The Healer.” He stood before the diseased, and sin stricken, and Satan-blinded world of men as the Healer. He

came to heal all diseases, all sicknesses amongst the people, and not only did he do this physically, but he did this physically as typical and symbolical of what he came to do with the world ever after down to this age and forthcoming ages, when faith in Jesus shall bring that blessed and halyon period when the prediction uttered above his lowly cradle shall be fulfilled, and there shall be "peace on earth and good will towards men." Now with regard to these several dates given of the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. If you antedate previous to the year I have given of the birth of Christ, then you do not remove the difficulty because Herod's goes along with it. In making a calculation in Chronology, you put different dates together—and calculate them by the Olympiads of Greece, the Egyptian, Syrian, and other epochs named thoths, and in this way learned and ingenious men endeavour to ascertain the date of a thing—and by comparing one thing with another they say that such an event took place in such a year. If you put 748 for Jesus' birth, you have 740 for the death of Herod—which does not remove the difficulty for an instant. Now we give stubborn facts: the fixing the date of a thing is a separate science—a matter of great scientific research: and sorry I am to say it is a neglected one among the youth of our day; for it is a most interesting study if you enter upon its examination, and pursue it amongst the other arts and sciences. But again, respecting the Hindoo and Egyptian dates, or the Hindoo and Chinese dates, I have said what is true on that subject, that there can be no dependence placed upon Hindoo and Chinese chronological calculations. This has been demonstrated again and again, irrefutably. If I understood, my friend referred to the history of the Hindoos extending 1,000 years before Christ. I have given 1,500 years already for profane history, backwards. Sir William Jones, to whom he refers, was a Christian writer, a judge of the civil courts at Bombay; and he not only followed his high and dignified position as chief judge of the supreme court of law at Bombay, but he added to his legal studies the study of the languages and literature of Hindostan; and he has given the result of these studies to the world. These studies go not to invalidate but to confirm Christianity, for Sir William Jones was as good a Christian as any in this audience. Then, with regard to these hieroglyphics: If I understand Mr. Bradlaugh

rightly, these hieroglyphics were taken from an Egyptian church. What churches are there except Christian churches? I have never heard of Hindoo churches, of Buddhist churches: I have never heard of any idol churches in Assyria, Babylon, or Chaldea. I may have misunderstood him, but, if I misrepresent him, I should be extremely sorry. What more natural on an ancient Egyptian church than the form of a cross. Go into the catacombs at Rome, and see there the effigies of the Christian religion all around: exhibited on the tombs of the early fathers and early believers of the Christian church—the martyrs of the first ages of Christianity—you find there frequently the form of the cross. But this is what I demand—the form of the cross connected with religion before the era of Christianity, or before the life and times of Jesus Christ. You will certainly find the cross before Jesus Christ, for the cross was the Roman method of putting slaves to death. The origin of the cross is this: it was used as a method of crucifying dogs as a terror to others, and, being so degraded a matter, the Romans crucified their slaves. Now, it is a Christian point that Jesus died the most ignominious death in the whole world. You must remember, the deeper you place his ignominy, the more you elevate him in grandeur, dignity, and glory: the more his shame, the darker his fate, the brighter, and more magnificent, and more resplendent the honours and the renown that crowns and encircles with an eternal halo his regal and glorious brow.

ICONOCLAST: I remarked before that we disagreed, and now we disagree still more. We disagree as to the precise words in the bible, as to the meaning of those words, and as to the mode of dealing with chronology. He says, if we remove the birth of Jesus, we must also remove the death of Herod. Now, the death of Herod is an historical fact, and the death of Jesus but a dubious uncertainty. At least, we have many testimonies as to the year Herod died, but I dispute and deny that we have any reliable testimony as to the year Jesus was born. This is a difference, and an important difference. Of course, if we may shift the year of Herod's death, it leaves the case as it was; but I deny you can shift a certain date to make out and explain an uncertain one. The date of Jesus' birth nobody knows; but the time

of Herod's death a number of circumstances corroborate. About the time of Christ's birth there is great difference of opinion, but Herod's death, on the contrary, is a matter about which there is comparatively little disagreement. Again, supposing that the statement of my friend clears up that difficulty, which it does not, you have my allegation that Luke makes it out that Jesus was born after Herod was dead. My friend has not explained this. My friend and I also disagree in our impression of Sir William Jones. He says he has read him, and I am glad that is so, because he will remember the words I shall take the liberty of repeating, and which rather overturned the idea given. He said he admitted 1,500 years before Christ for the religion of the Hindoos.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I said, my friend had told us that Sir William Jones says that the history of the Hindoos extends to 1,000 years before Christ, and that I had already stated during the evening's discussion that history—that is genuine history—extends as far back as 1,500 years before Christ; but farther than that you must go to Hebrew history before you can have anything like veracious history.

ICONOCLAST: I take it as it is. It don't better the position at all. My friend must remember that Sir William Jones and he entirely and utterly disagree. First of all, that author admits 1,000 years before the commencement of the Christian era, for the existence of the religion of Chrishna. Secondly, Sir William Jones states that the religions of Greece, Italy, and India existed and had communication with each other much more than 1,000 years before the Christian era; and when my friend says you cannot carry history back more than 1,500 years before Christ, he is simply telling us that he has not investigated further back. Of course, you find the fabulous mixed with the real in an increasing ratio every year. At present it is simply an assertion which no well-read person should make; because, if well read, and he pretends that you can trace no further back than 3,400 years from to-day, and must, after that, go to the bible, he will know it is not true; and if he makes that statement, believing it to be true, we shall know he is not well-read. Then, as to the last words of Jesus in the

four gospels. He says they were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What were the last words? My friend has asked for them, and he shall have them. What were the last words of Jesus? who my friend told you was God, one of the divine trinity. The last words, as we have them in two of the four gospels, the last words he spoke, and the last testimony that fell from his lips were, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani"—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." My friend, no doubt, did not mean to say they were the last words spoken by Jesus on the cross; but if he does not quote more accurately from the gospels, we must be careful in accepting his quotations from other works. He says he has proved Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the gospels: he has simply said, men say so; and he has not quoted direct, but has quoted third hand from some yet unknown writer. He simply tells us it is not from Lardner or Paley, but he has not told us who it is, or, in one instance, of the particular document he quotes from, so that I may have the opportunity of saying it is untrustworthy. My friend says he need not answer "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me:"—and why not? If it is in a parable—which I deny—if it is in a parable, it teaches bad doctrine, and it has to be answered. I say it is an immoral doctrine. I say Jesus did not teach it in a parable, but after the parable he said "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." Is there any character of a parable in that. It is at the conclusion of the parable, following after the parable, and the mendacious and false translators have put in a paragraph mark, and tried to make ignorant people believe it belongs to the parable. But if in a parable, is that not a teaching to be followed, is that not a doctrine to be defended? Is it right to slaughter men who reject a king? Let my friend defend that. Whether a parable or not, it wants explaining and defending, and must be dealt with. My friend told you that the bible would have faith, and reproached faith without works. I thought it was something different. I find that "we conclude that man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." My friend does not quote his

bible correctly, which we have to refer to, then how can we rely upon his quotations from other men, whose names he withholds and whose quotations I dispute? Again, my friend goes on to tell us, we all live by faith. What kind of faith? Is it the faith that Paul spoke of, "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"? If you use words you must be careful not to misrepresent the meaning; and if we say faith in the religious sense, in the sense used in the gospels, I deny that men live by faith. Men live, knowing what has happened, and does happen, from which they form certain conclusions for the future. If he calls that faith, see how different it is from the belief in God. You know nothing of God, and can know nothing of him, His attribute is incomprehensibility, and yet faith in that which we can never know is compared with faith in the known: the result of what has happened and is happening, the confidence of everyday life founded on experience. My friend is merely mis-saying, and mis-stating. When a man states to you "I believe in the four gospels," he simply utters words which have no real meaning to them. A man must be able to reconcile the matters connected with the gospels, and which he must take into consideration. Knowledge transcends faith, knowledge rises above faith, and is superior to faith. Now the working faith of man, if faith it be at all, is faith on knowledge, reason, or experience, thought on evidence, and founded on the past and the present; and I deny there is the slightest analogy between the faith of everyday life and that faith in the gospels which my friend and those gospels require as a test of salvation. I mean to turn on him and say Jesus himself had no faith. Jesus, whom he represents as God, who holds out faith to us as a matter for reward and salvation, himself had no faith on the cross—himself, enthusiast, deceived or deceiving, cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which he never would have done if he believed God would not forsake him in his hour of trouble. My friend has not dealt quite as fully as he might with the matters in hand. He said I had not instanced any action of Jesus which required dealing with: I should fancy that the cursing of the fig tree would be a matter requiring particular and grave dealing with at the hands of any man defending the actions of Jesus. I think my friend must have forgotten it, or he would not

have allowed it to pass. My friend says the argument on requiring no thought for the morrow, needs no answer, because Bacon died of over anxiety. When Jesus said "take no thought" did he mean that the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air were not over anxious, or that they lived without thought?

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: The first thing I now reply to is that the last words and the last sayings of Jesus are seven in number, and I quoted one of the last of the seven sayings uttered upon the cross. The last saying was not "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." In this Mr. Bradlaugh is mistaken. The last of the seven sayings is "It is finished," and he gave up the ghost and died. Then in the next place with regard to faith, a quotation has been given, and it will be necessary for me to show how the two are reconciled. But before I do justice to my side of the argument, and I fear I shall not be able to enter upon that this evening, I shall give the quotation from the epistle, James, 2nd chap., 14th verse: "What doeth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; what doeth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." So you see I can give you my quotations correctly from my new testament. So that you perceive does not imply that my other quotations are in the least degree incorrect and inaccurate: "Yet a man may say, thou hast faith and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead." So you see that what the bible teaches with regard to faith is entirely rational and congruous with truth and the nature and fitness of things. It teaches us that it is necessary that we should have faith in the author of our salvation, or else how are we going to receive *the salvation* from his hands? that unless we come forward and exercise faith in him, he is morally incapable of imparting that certain salvation which we believe he is, as a

Mediator, able to impart and to bestow. Now I avow that the Christian—the intelligent Christian—is the most rational being in the whole world; and during the course of our debate I shall proceed to prove it as satisfactorily and conclusively as I can. Christianity demands faith; and in doing so, Christianity is—again I repeat it—congruous with truth and the nature and fitness of things. It demands not only faith, but repentance. That glorious word, “repentance,”—that golden epithet, “repentance.” Thomas de Quincey terms it in “The Selections grave and gay,” in the 2nd vol. of his works, “the changing of our moral standpoint from a geocentric to a heliocentric centre,” &c. But I may refer to this again in the course of the debate. He has an excellent critique with regard to the meaning of the word *Metâmoia*, (repentance) *which* revolutionized Judea—which entered the Roman empire,—which flowed as a spring of new life,—and which threw into it that vital energy and force, which has ever since been in operation. These are the two demands of Christianity,—“repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ:” and I repeat my *a priori* argument, where I affirm that these things are calculated, and only calculated, to benefit humanity, and that where men individually or collectively reject these moral principles they hurt themselves, and inflict upon themselves self-inflicted and wilful injury. It will be my duty to go from the *a priori* argument which shows that the tendency of the doctrines is to do good, judged antecedently, and to show that practiced they have wrought good for humanity, and brought good to the human family. With respect to the barren fig tree, it was blighted as a sign to the Jewish nation that such should be their condition; and as my friend repeatedly refers to my believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ—has he not, I ask, power over his own works? You must remember the *stand-point* which I took, and when you judge what I say, whether you believe as I do or not, you must judge the thing according to its own *stand-point* before you are rational in your conclusions. But what does it matter with regard to the tree? Is there any crime here? any immoral teaching here? For my own part, I do not perceive it in the least degree. It appears to me, as the lawyers sometimes say, the making up a case when you have no case—trying to trump up one; when there is nothing to do, trying to get something to do; determined,

where the field is so meagre, to snatch at anything, as sinking men snatch at straws. With regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ, I might refer you to the beautiful morality of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Is not that calculated—the teaching of that splendid parable—to benefit humanity? where we read of that young man, shrewd and ingenious, but, at the same time, so affected with the narrow prejudices of his countrymen—for the Jews were proverbially narrow-minded, as much, or more so, than the Chinamen or Japanese of the present day—the Jew counted the Gentile a dog, and treated him with scorn. When Jesus said, “Do this and thou shalt live,”—that is, love thy neighbour,—the lawyer then asked, “Who is my neighbour?” endeavouring to coil himself into a narrow circle, when Jesus gives him the parable of the Good Samaritan, to show that every man is my neighbour. Then was established the doctrine of universal brotherhood,

“That man to man, the wide world o’er,
Should brothers be and a’ that.”

This is the splendid doctrine of Jesus; and as you follow the stream of philanthropy and benevolence which comes down the channel of time from this crystal spring, still widening and deepening in its course: as I trace the Orinoco, Amazon, Mississippi, and other mighty rivers of the globe, away from the prairies and up the rocky mountains, and at last find it gushes there, high up in the lofty hills, in a beautiful gushing and perennial spring, just so do I trace the philanthropy and benevolence that has characterized the 1,800 years past from the era of Christianity, which has come down from the teachings of Jesus, and especially from the teaching of that parable and the other moral teachings and generous sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A vote of thanks was then unanimously accorded to the chairman.

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 3, 1859.

PROPOSITION (CONTINUED.)

**"THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST NOT CALCULATED TO
BENEFIT HUMANITY."**

MR. JEREMIAH OLIVE in the Chair.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS : Mr. Chairman and friends : The first thing I shall do this evening will be to take up a little matter hitherto neglected, respecting a passage in John, 7th chapter, and 40th verse. We were informed in the course of the debate that when Jesus was told he had come out from Nazareth, and not from Bethlehem, he did not make that reply which would have removed the false impression upon the people's mind who thus and then spoke to him. Now I hold in my hand the new testament, wherein the matter is detailed, and here we find that instead of the people's saying so to Jesus Christ, what they spoke was to one another. But I had better go over the context. "In the last day that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying—If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink? He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" There is the end of the paragraph, and the 40th verse begins a new paragraph—"Many of the people therefore when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed

of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him." Now I cannot for my life perceive that Jesus had anything to do with the matter. It was purely and simply a conversation between certain persons, on what Christ had previously said in the 37th, 38th, and 39th verses—so that I believe that the whole matter on that point is very well disposed of. The next thing I have to do is with reference to my authorities. I was requested last evening to supply these authorities. I can confidently and truly assert that I have not made use neither of Paley nor Lardner—so now I shall refer distinctly to those authorities which I have made that use of that I deemed necessary. The first book I refer to is "The Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels," by Andrews Norton, a work of unquestionable erudition, and of irrefutable veracity. The next is Alexander Keith's "Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion;" Horne's "Introduction to a Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures;" next "Christianity and its Evidences," by Rogers; "Essays Sceptical and Anti-Sceptical," by Thomas de Quincey; next "Atheism considered Theologically and Politically," by Lyman Beecher, father of the celebrated Harriet Beecher Stowe. The next is "The Canon of the Old and New Testament Scriptures ascertained," &c., by Archibald Alexander; and next and last, "The Popular Biblical Educator," vols. 1 and 2. The next thing I shall attend to will be to read just now by your permission and forbearance extracts from celebrated sceptics respecting the moral excellency of the character of Jesus Christ. The first will be the celebrated J. J. Rousseau, and his testimony to the character of our Lord, from that well known production "Emile." This is what he says "I confess that the majesty of the scriptures astonishes me, that the sanctity of the gospel speaks to my heart. View the books of the philosophers with all their pomp; what a littleness have they when compared with this. It is impossible that a character at once so sublime, should be the work of men! Is it possible that he, whose history it records, should be himself a mere man? Is this the style of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! what affecting grace in his instructions! what elevation in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses—what presence of

mind, what delicacy and justness in his replies ! what empire in and over his passions ! Where is the man, where is the philosopher, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die without weakness and without ostentation ? When Plato paints his imaginary just man, covered with all the ignominy of guilt, and deserving all the honours of virtue, he paints Jesus Christ in every stroke of his pencil ; the resemblance is so strong that all the fathers have perceived it, and that it is not possible to mistake it. What prejudices, what blindness must they have, who dare to draw a comparison between the son of Sophronisus and the son of Mary ! What distance is there between the one and the other ! As Socrates died without pain and disgrace, he found no difficulty in supporting his character to the end ; and if this easy death had not shed a lustre on his life, we might have doubted whether Socrates, with all his genius, was anything but a sophist. They say that he invented morality. Others before him had practised it ; he only said what they had done, he only read letters on their examples. Aristides had been just before Socrates explained the nature of justice ; Leonidas had died for his country before Socrates made it the duty of men to love their country ; Sparta had been temperate before Socrates praised temperance ; Greece had abounded in virtuous men before he defined virtue. But where could Jesus have taken among his countrymen that elevated and pure morality, of which he alone furnished both the precepts and the example ? The most lofty wisdom was heard from the most furious fanaticism ; and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honoured the vilest of all people. The death of Socrates, serenely philosophising with his friends, is the most gentle that one can desire : that of Jesus, expiring in torments, injured, derided, reviled by a whole people, is the most horrible that one can fear. When Socrates takes the poisoned cup, he blesses him who presents it, and who at the same time weeps ; Jesus, in the midst of a horrid punishment, prays for his enraged executioners. Yes : if the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of God. Shall we say the history of the gospel is invented at pleasure ? My friend, it is thus that men invent ; and the actions of Socrates, concerning which no one doubts, are less attested than those of Jesus Christ. After all, this is shifting the

difficulty instead of solving it, for it would be more inconceivable that a number of men should write this book in concert, than that one should furnish the subject of it. Jewish authors would have devised such a manner, and such morality; and the gospel has characters of truth so great, so striking, so perfectly inimitable that its inventor would be still more astonishing than its hero." The next quotation will be from another celebrated sceptic, Theodore Parker. From the sixth essay, in the 136th page, in the volume entitled "The Critical and Miscellaneous of Theodore Parker;" beginning at page 137:—"Christ says his words shall never pass away. Yet at first sight nothing seems more fleeting than a word. It is an evanescent impulse of the most fickle element. It leaves no track where it went through the air. Yet to this, and this only, did Jesus entrust the truth wherewith he came laden to the earth—truth for the salvation of the world. He took no pains to perpetuate his thoughts; they were poured forth where occasion found him an audience,—by the side of the lake, or a well; in a cottage, or the temple; in a fisher's boat, or the synagogue of the Jews. He founds no institution as a monument of his words. He appoints no order of men to preserve his bright and glad revelations. He only bids his friends give freely the truth they had freely received. He did not even write his words in a book. With a noble confidence, the result of his abiding faith, he scattered them broadcast on the world, leaving the seed to its own vitality. He knew that what is of God cannot fail, for God keeps his own. He sowed his seed in the heart, and left it there, to be watered and warmed by the dew and the sun which heaven sends. He felt his words were for eternity: so he trusted them to the uncertain air; and for 1,800 years that faithful element has held them good,—distinct as when first warm from his lips. Now, they are translated into every human speech, and murmured in all earth's thousand tongues, from the pine forests of the north to the palm groves of Eastern India. They mingle, as it were, with the roar of the populous city, and join the chime of the desert sea. Of a Sabbath morn they are repeated from church to church, from isle to isle, and land to land, till their music goes round the world. These words have become the breath of the good, the hope of the wise, the joy of the pious, and that for millions of

hearts. They are the prayers of our churches; our better devotion by fireside and fieldside; the enchantment of our hearts. It is these words that still work wonders, to which the first recorded miracles were nothing in grandeur and utility. It is these which build our temples and beautify our homes. They raise our thoughts of sublimity; they purify our ideal of purity; they hallow our prayer for truth and love; they make beautiful and divine the life which plain men lead; they give wings to our aspirations. What charmers they are! Sorrow is lulled at their bidding. They take the sting out of disease, and rob adversity of his power to disappoint. They give health and wings to the pious soul, broken-hearted and shipwrecked in his voyage through life, and encourage him to tempt the perilous way once more. They make all things ours: Christ our brother; time our servant; death our ally and the witness of our triumph. They reveal to us the presence of God, which else we might not have seen so clearly, in the first wind-flower of spring; in the falling of a sparrow; in the distress of a nation, in the sorrow or the rapture of the world. Silence the voice of Christianity, and the world is well nigh dumb, for gone is that sweet music which kept in awe the rulers and the people, which cheers the poor widow in her lonely toil, and comes like light through the windows of morning, to men who sit stooping and feeble, with failing eyes and a hungering heart. It is gone—all gone! only the cold, bleak world left before them. Such is the life of these words; such the empire they have won for themselves over men's minds since they were spoken first. In the meantime the words of the great men and mighty, whose name shook whole continents, though graven in metal and stone, though stamped in institutions, and defended by whole tribes of priests and troops of followers—their words have gone to the ground, and the world gives back no echo of their voice. Meanwhile the great works also of old times, castle and tower and town, their cities and their empires, have perished, and left scarce a mark on the bosom of the earth to show they once have been. The philosophy of the wise, the art of the accomplished, the song of the poet, the ritual of the priest, though honoured as divine in their day, have gone down, a prey to oblivion. Silence has closed over them; only their spectres now haunt the earth. A deluge of blood has swept over the

nations; a night of darkness, more deep than the fabled darkness of Egypt, has lowered down upon that flood to destroy or hide what the deluge had spared. But through all this the words of Christianity have come down to us from the lips of that Hebrew youth, gentle and beautiful as the light of a star, not spent by their journey through time and through space. They have built up a new civilisation, which the wisest Gentile never hoped for; which the most pious Hebrew never foretold. Through centuries of wasting, these words have flown on, like a dove in the storm, and now wait to descend on hearts pure and earnest, as the Father's spirit, we are told, came down on his lowly son. The old heavens and the old earth are indeed passed away, but the Word stands. Nothing shows clearer than this how fleeting is what man calls great, how lasting what God pronounces true." I thought it necessary to read to you, a portion of the beautiful testimony of Rousseau, and then the equally eloquent testimony of Theodore Parker, of Boston, America, to the character of Jesus, and to the tendency and influence of his gospel,—of those doctrines, those precepts, and those words which he uttered and enunciated. I shall this evening proceed in the first place to the second part of our argument. The previous evening we took up the *a priori*, or argument from cause to effect. This evening I shall proceed with the argument from effect to cause, and in affirming that Christianity is calculated to benefit mankind, I refer you to the accounts handed down to us of primitive Christians—those who immediately succeeded in the next generations the apostles of our Lord and master. The testimony given of them in their day and generation by even their adversaries was "see how they love one another." Whilst the heathen populace around them were guilty of all the grosser vices and immersed in the most flagrant immorality,—lived in a state of dissension, rankling jealousy, and suspicion,—in a state of continual ferment and perturbation—these communities which were forming in the heart of the empire of the Cæsars, these growing communities were characterised by deep and ardent attachment not only to the master they loved and followed, but because of their love to him they loved one another—for this was one of the primary articles of their belief, that they were to test their love to God, and their love to their Saviour, by their love one towards another.

"Hereby," says John, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Is not this doctrine calculated to benefit humanity? and does not the character of primitive Christianity prove that it benefitted them? and if the world had exhibited it at that time, is there any sane, rational being that can dare to deny or affirm that Christianity is not calculated to benefit humanity? There are three great principles I desire to bring before you this evening as advanced, enforced, exhibited, and exemplified by that primitive church. The first is Truth. The great principle of truth was by them brought prominently forwards, and it has ever since been more and more developing itself in the history of our world. You will find it nobly exemplified in the character of Polycarp. As an old man,—as a venerable Christian, he was even respected by his adversaries. We find this by the treatment of the Roman officer who conveyed him to execution and who took him in his charity and bade him sit with him, and what did he do? He remonstrated with him about his stubbornness and said to him—Unless you do burn incense to the emperor as the great God, and unless you take the incense and put it into the vestal fire, and swear by the name of the emperor, you will be torn in pieces by the lions. Now all you have to do is to make this reserve in your mind, that instead of doing it to the emperor as a God, you merely do it to the genius of the emperor. Let that reserve be made and you will escape. What was the reply of the Christian? That he dared not be disloyal to the truth. Although there was an awful death before him; the amphitheatre, the hungry lions, and the gazing spectators—all that is terrible to humanity—one thing there was more terrible still before him, and that was disloyalty to truth. And I affirm that in this age was begotten that great and noble principle, which will by all present be considered the most valuable treasure man can possess—fidelity and loyalty to truth, careless and fearless of consequences. Next there is conscience—an individual conscience was developed. The Roman senate considered it each man's duty to accept the religion of the state and nation which gave him birth: *that* a Roman should be a Roman in religion, and *that* a Parthian should

be a Parthian in religion—if a Parthian by birth he must be a Parthian in religion also—and when they came to Rome they were not considered bound to the worship of Rome, but brought their own gods with them. There was a worship imposed on communities and commonwealths, and there was also provided a public conscience, that each man should do the bidding of those who were his superiors; but the Christian dared assert his individual conscience; and for this they were martyred by tens of thousands, because they dared be true to their individual convictions, because, what they conscientiously believed, those they would abide by—not caring, not heeding who made them afraid, or who confronted them, and threatened them with fetters, or a cruel death. The other principle which was developed at this time was the religious obligation of belief—man's religious obligations with regard to his own religious sentiments, opinions, and convictions. But I pass by this now, and come and look at the progress of humanity, as we behold the Huns, the Goths, the Visigoths, and the Ostrogoths, pouring down on Imperial Rome, which is fast hastening to decay. From the Hyrcanian forests there they come down, deserting the wild plains of the Danube and the Dnieper—they cross the Adige and the Po—they enter into the fair Etruscan and Italian states—pouring on Rome and along the banks of the Tiber, there they come, those rough visages, stalwart in form, full of barbaric pride, and all that is gross and sensual in humanity: and yet they came to conquer, but were conquered—they came to subdue, but were subdued. What was it conquered them? They came to conquer, by force of arms, physically, but they were conquered mentally and morally. They came as barbarians, but the civilizing influence of Christianity got hold of them, and, ere long, succeeded in gaining its glorious victory over them. And what do we see springing under the influence of Christianity—under its civilizing, ennobling, and elevating influence? We behold the kingdoms of Europe rising from the dust—from the degradation of barbarism, of ignorance, and squalor, of everything disgusting in humanity, and forming separate and independent commonwealths: now does law, and liberty, and progress begin to unfold themselves in the history and destinies of Europe. Christianity calculated to benefit humanity? What is it that has raised Europe above the

other three quarters of the globe? What is it that has made Europe superior to Asia? Asia, which is vastly superior to Europe with reference to its soil, and with regard to its antiquity? Asia, that was the cradle of the human race? Asia, that has so many superior advantages to Europe? Why, because that Christianity, as I have said, had taken hold upon the native hordes that came from the banks of the Danube and the Vistula, and the other rivers of Germany: because, under the influence of Christianity they began to form themselves into communities, and grew into the present development of European commonwealths and kingdoms. But we might furnish other instances, demonstrating our position that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity, from the condition of the Albigenses and the Waldenses of the Alpine gorges, those who were driven by the iron-handed power of Rome, through fiery persecution, to seek for an asylum for conscience and liberty of opinion—"freedom to worship God," amid the hills of Piedmont and the Alps. There—whilst we see around all Europe the peoples and nations struggling with despotism—whilst the bible is debarred from the use of the common people as a book that has a tendency to generate in them noble feelings for liberty and progress—here are sheltered these simple-minded mountaineers, the conservators of Christian truth, ideas, and principles; and in looking at their simple lives, and looking at all in their history that is beautiful, and noble, and splendid, we behold at once the benefits of Christianity as calculated to benefit mankind. In the next place, we come further down to the age of the Puritan fathers, who fled for an asylum from our shores when liberty was driven over, roughshod, by the would-be despotic monarchs of England. The Puritans, feeling the influence of Christianity, and resolved to live or die by its principles, betook themselves to the wilds of North America.

ICONOCLAST: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and friends: My friend asks why the European is superior to the other inhabitants of the world. I have lying before me Professor Agassiz's sketch of the different types of man, and he gives me the Caucasian, or European order, as the highest order of organisation in the world; and therefore, apart from his religion, the European type will be the superior type in the

world. That much for that argument. Now, my friend was to-night to have quoted some authorities; but what has he given? Has he told us which of the writings of Barnabas I was to refute? Which of the writings of Clement of Rome or Clement of Alexandria I was to deal with? Which book of the Shepherd of Hermas I was to deny? Which volume of Ignatius, or Justin Martyr, he relied upon? Has he told us this? Nothing of the kind; but he tells us something of Norton, and if my memory mistakes me not, he has not really quoted from Norton at all, but from Lardner and Paley. At any rate, if Norton does not quote from Paley, whoever was the author my friend read Papias from, does so quote, and I deny his truth, and allege his entire falsity. And instead of my friend quoting third-hand from Norton—who quotes from somebody else—if that passage of Papias be quoted from Norton, it being given in Paley's words, who, if I mistake not, follows in Lardner's steps—in all fairness he was bound to show I was mistaken and incorrect in saying that what he quoted from Papias was untrue. Now, we have not had one clue to deal with the alleged Christian evidences. To quote Beecher is to quote nothing; and as to what my friend has quoted from Rosseau and Theodore Parker, I can only say, I am glad to hear him quote them, and I hope they will be read and quoted much more than they have been. My friend tells you that Jesus needed not to answer the people who denied that he was born in Bethlehem, because they did not say it to him. But the only meaning of the text is that it was said in his presence, and that, if they spoke to one another, they spoke in the presence of Jesus, for there is nothing to say that he went out of their presence. "Many of the people, when they heard this, said"—so and so. I submit that the objection has not been met at all. If the sneer was made in his presence, or made so that he knew of it, it is much to be wondered at that he did not answer it, and clear up the difficulty. Now, my friend has urged further upon you, and more especially in last night's discussion, that a great many good effects have resulted from Christianity, and, in a most eloquent manner, last night he traced the stream of good things for 1,800 years. If he had done nothing more, I might have wondered upon what he based his speech, and I could have done nothing more than wondered: but this evening he gives an

instance, and quotes the Christian church as an example of truth. And who does he give as an instance? One Polycarp, whose existence is about as certain as that of the farmer whom Hercules told to work instead of pray. That Polycarp existed is barely possible; the whole of his history is a myth, and, if my friend deny this, I will read such things of Polycarp as will astonish him, and which, if he had known, he would never have quoted him at all. That Polycarp existed I know nothing about, but of what he did and said we have such an extraordinary account that no sane man would attempt to rely upon it as literal history. My friend quoted the parable of the Good Samaritan as inculcating teachings which you should all follow, but he forgot when he put that parable before you as good teaching—by the same rule—he was bound to answer that which he says is a parable, and which I say is not—i.e., “But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.” Why take the Good Samaritan as teaching morality whilst this is teaching murder? My friend is here to support the morality of the teachings of the book, and if he quote a parable on one side doubly bound is he to remove even the appearance of immorality which attaches to another part, which I allege to be the plain teaching of Jesus himself, and, as I proceed, you will see I have further ground for what I say. My friend told you, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani” were not the last words of Jesus. I will give my friend credit for knowing more of his religion than I possibly can do, but Matthew and Mark give them as the last words, and, if they were not so, then Matthew and Mark are wrong, and that is all I am arguing for. But we will take the words, whether they be the last or not. According to my friend, Jesus is the God—the divinity. What did Jesus mean by crying out, in the bitter anguish of dying despair, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Did God deem himself forsaken by himself? Is this the high morality you teach me? And if you tell me of mysteries, I can imagine no greater mystery than God himself dying on the cross, who can never die, and in his dying moment deeming himself forsaken by himself, who himself placed him there. I do not mean this in ridicule or sneer. I feel it an earnest, heartfelt, deep opinion, which must rise to every man that thinks upon

it, and compel him to doubt in that deity, when you deem God himself can be forsaken by himself. My friend says I am wrong in telling you the bible recommended faith without works. He quoted James, 2nd chapter, and 17th to 20th verses, and I admit James says faith without works is dead. But what effect has that on the argument. I quoted Romans, 3rd chapter, 20th to 28th verses, which tells you that works have nothing to do with faith, and that we are justified by faith without works. If the two passages contradict each other it is all I am asking for. I will grant that for every objection I can bring, from some other part of the bible he shall bring a passage which answers it, but it does not answer me: it merely proves that the witness whom I am examining is a witness who contradicts himself, who prevaricates, on whose credibility we cannot rely, and whose sayings being false cannot be of benefit to us. My friend, with an eloquence worthy of a better cause, said that the stream had flown along, bringing with it the purity of ages. I will try to trace that stream—and through whom shall I trace it? Shall I trace it through the fathers of the church whom you have introduced to us? Shall I trace it through the men whose writings you now begin to contend are the bulwarks and pillars of the church? Because, if so, what a history I shall have to give. Shall I go to the Popes—the early fathers and the chief bishops of the church?—and tell you that forty schisms have profaned the chair of St. Peter, twenty-seven of which have been marked by blood; that Peter-VII., the son of a priest, disinterred the corpse of Formosus, his predecessor, and had the head of it cut off; that Sergius III., convicted of assassination, had a son by Marozia who inherited the popedom; that John X., the paramour of Theodora, was strangled in her bed; that John XI., son of Sergius III., was known only by his gross intemperance; that John XII. was assassinated in the apartments of his mistress; that Benedict IX. both bought and sold the pontificate; that Gregory VII. was the author of 500 years of civil war, carried on by his successors; and that finally, among so many ambitious, sanguinary, and debauched popes, there was an Alexander VI., whose name is pronounced with the same horror as those of Nero and Caligula: and shall I wind up the history of the fathers of the church with that most base and degraded name, Alexander Borgia? Shall I trace the

stream through the councils of the church? Shall I show you one council giving one doctrine, and the next council declaring it to be a damnable heresy? Shall I show you the bishops of the loving church in the stream, at their very council table swearing at and fighting with one another, as to the doctrines to be taught to the people? Shall I show that year after year, and century after century, these councils were held, and the fruits of them all were bickerings, anathemas, excommunications, and quarrels, as to the right doctrine, and as to which was the right faith? Shall I trace it up that way? Or shall I trace it through the Christian emperors, beginning with the great and good Constantine, who impelled his father-in-law to hang himself, caused his brother to be strangled, ordered his young nephew's throat to be cut, beheaded his eldest son, and ordered his wife to be suffocated in a bath? Shall I point out to you the many crimes committed in the religious crusades? Shall I tell you that Photius relates that at Constantinople, because the partisans of the council of Chalcedon chanted the verses from a prayer, the Eutychians were offended, the service was interrupted, and both commenced fighting in the church; the people rushed out and obtained arms, carnage and conflagration ensued, which was only appeased by 10,000 lives. My friend referred to a 70,000 which I disputed, but before I sit down I will give you 700,000, mingled with whose ashes and blood that pure stream flows down to us, tainted to this day. I will tell you of the fruits of that religious system which my friend defends. The Empress Theodora, who gave the form of law to the second council of Nice, extinguished the party of Iconoclasts, or image breakers, and exerted the utmost extent of her authority against the Manicheans. She despatched orders throughout the empire to seek for them everywhere, and put all those to death who would not recant. More than 100,000 perished by different modes of execution. Four thousand who escaped from this severe scrutiny and extensive punishment, took refuge among the Saracens—fleeing their loving brethren, to live amongst people who did not believe in the Christian religion of love, uniting with them, and in their burning hatred both of the emperors and Catholics they frequently inflicted on the territories of the empire dread and devastation, and cut to pieces its disciplined armies. Then we come a little later, and find how at Seville,

by virtue of the different edicts of the kings of Spain, and of the inquisitors general and particular established in that kingdom, there were, in a very short time, about 2,000 heretics burned at Seville, and more than 4,000 from 1482 to 1520. A vast number of others were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, or exposed to inflictions of different descriptions. Or shall I tell of Toledo, where, in the short space of two years, there were actually burnt at the stake fifty two obstinate heretics, and two hundred and twenty more were outlawed? Or shall I tell of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when the Catholics destroyed the Protestants? or of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Protestants burnt the Catholics? or of the Protestant statutes in England under which the Catholics were terribly persecuted?—so pure and so good are the effects to be all attributed to this book! Jesus says, "Every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire;" and I charge on that tree that the apples it has borne have been apples of discord, inhumanity, bloodshed, and treachery; and I cry, hew it down, cast it into the deep sea of the past—the only bottomless pit—and let us have no more of that tree so long bathed with the blood of humanity. My friend told us last night, with a power I should be glad to imitate, that the fig tree, God's own tree, was destroyed by God's own power, which I was not in a position to dispute, and therefore that I must not question it. Will he tell me what moral truth, what moral precept, can be deduced from God striking down a tree because it had not got upon it fruit that it could not by possibility have on its branches at the time? He tells me it was intended as a warning to the Jewish nation, but I find nothing of that in the book; and will he tell me if these words have any application to him—"If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book?" My friend tells you that the miracle of the fig tree is God's own act—that Jesus withered it as God—and yet he tells us that when he goes to fast in the wilderness that was not the act of God, but of man. Will he tell me how to distinguish from God's acts and man's acts when reading the gospel history of Jesus, and when one is the act of man and the other God? If I judge aright the attributes of the Deity of my friend, one should be that of wisdom. Will you tell me the wisdom of

the man or God who, wanting food, goes to a tree to find on it that which he knows is not there, and then curses the tree because it had not that he never expected to be on it? I confess I cannot see the moral lesson therein inculcated. Again, will he tell me the moral lesson Jesus taught when he cast the devils out of the man, they besought to be permitted to go into the swine which were not the property of Jesus—and being permitted they go into the swine, which rushed into the sea and were drowned, thus inflicting great loss on the man who owned them: what moral lesson could be taught by that act of God or man? Nay more, will he tell me how it was that Jesus said that he did not come to save the Gentiles, but to save the lost sheep of Israel? My friend says that this gospel is intended for all people, and I will confess at once that he will find me a text in Mark, who says "Go ye into all the world," but if in the same gospel you find two texts contradicting one another, it is no proof of goodness, but rather of weakness and inutility. In Matthew, 10th chapter and 15th verse, Jesus says to his disciples "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and in the 15th chapter and 24th verse of the same gospel we find this, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The disciples said this woman is asking and entreating; do let her go, and Jesus then says in plain and distinct words that he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel. Why does our friend hold him forth as a teacher of all humanity? Jesus should know to whom he was sent, and he himself says he was not sent unto the Gentiles; and to tell us at a later appearance to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is only proof of another inconsistency,—one more inconsistency of the doctrine I am attacking. Now my friend has been holding up to you the whole of those doctrines as resulting in something very good; but he has not proved the good, and therefore I cannot deal with that, but am obliged to deal with the text itself; and from the teaching of Jesus, I confess I cannot find it so. Jesus says to his disciples—"If the house be worthy let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy let your peace return to you; and whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city shake the dust off your

feet: verily I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." And why is this judgment denounced? Not for their wickedness, but because they would not receive the disciples. Not because these people were as wicked as the people of Sodom and Gomorrha, but because they might not receive people who came to preach a new gospel, who came to preach a strange gospel—which gospel the preachers so little understood that no sooner was their Lord dead than the very disciples themselves quarrelled about it. That Sodom and Gomorrha—cities in which the worst crimes were perpetrated—are to escape with less punishment than the men who refused to accept these disciples: what is the result of such doctrines? What, but as Jesus himself says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword; for I am come to set man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes they of his own household." This very doctrine of belief does necessarily take away a man's free thought and action, and you make the test of belief,—a belief not in the known,—a belief not in the true,—but a belief in the unknown, unknowable, and the false, and a belief in the inconsistent and incoherent. My friend did not attempt to grapple between the two kinds of faith; and he admits, therefore, there is a difference between them—a difference enough to stamp on one anything but belief. The man who reasons from experience acts not with belief in the unknown, but upon a confidence in what has passed before, and a reasoning out of the probabilities for the future; but the man who reasons on the incomprehensible, reasons in fact not at all, but takes a blind standard, and striking with eyes bandaged hits he knows not who or where, and acts by a blind faith and not by thought, which is the light of every man through the world. I do not know how far my friend will deal with the next matter—the sin against the Holy Ghost. When I rise again I shall tell you what it is. I ask him in this moral system of his to tell me what this sin is which is to overrule all faith, and all works, and which is to stand like a granite rock between man and heaven,—an unknown sin,—a terrible indictment, against man, with a verdict found guilty, he knows not how or when, and himself judged and

condemned, without the possibility of defence or escape. A moral system? In what is it moral? Its evidence weak, so weak that they rely on men who lived in fabled times, if ever they lived at all, and whose lives come wrapped to us with fabulous mysteries; and last, not least, driven from the stronghold—the granite rock of which my friend boasted, it is left to Rosseau and Parker to give their testimony to that religious system which I am attacking. These gospels are written by men, and as men's thoughts receive them,—fallible men like yourselves, like Rosseau and Parker,—then will my mission be attained. I am loth to say anything severe in this matter, but my friend must grapple with the difficulties before him. He must tell us what Jesus meant when he uttered murderous words, whether in a parable or not, and if he be God, why he spoke so ungodly, and acted so unmanly. Let him answer me this, and then other counts of this indictment will I raise against him.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I am very sorry that I shall have to spoil the sport of my friend, and deprive him of his just now idly spoken speech, with respect not to *the Christians*, but to the *non-Christians*, and *anti-Christians* to whom he referred. I stand here as the advocate of Christianity, pure and simple—unadulterated—as it is in *the book*, which I hold in my hand, and as it has been exemplified in the lives of those who have earnestly believed—and genuinely practised it. Cæsar Borgia a Christian? I never thought any one would dare to assert him to be a Christian. He called himself a Christian, 'tis true: but if you go to the lower end of Halifax you will find men and women who call themselves Christians; but do you call and recognise them as such,—in the genuine sense of the word, such as Paul was when he appealed to King Agrippa on his throne, who exclaimed “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,” when Paul said “I would thou wert both almost and altogether such a one as I am”? Now I ask my friend to consider the character of Paul, and if these are the Christians which this book is calculated to produce, then when every man is a Paul, and every woman a Christian Mary, sitting at the foot of Jesus, I believe assuredly there will not be a dissentient voice to the fact that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity. Now with regard to the parable, I reiterate it, they are not

the words of Jesus, but the words of the nobleman of whom Jesus speaks in the parable. It is an allegory, and it is not Jesus but this insulted nobleman who says "Bring these mine enemies and slay them before my face." Jesus is speaking a parable, and this is the conclusion of the parable. Jesus does not say with reference to himself at all. Had Jesus spoken the words literally himself as a man standing amongst his Jewish cotemporaries,—had he said bring these men, Matthew or Cleophas—or whoever they might have been—bring them and slay them before my face, *the indictment* would be true. But I say that it is a false indictment and it is *not proven*. Then again, with regard to the last sayings of Christ, you will find on referring to your bibles, Matt., 27th ch., 50th verse, these words, "Jesus, when he had cried *again*." In John you have the cry "It is finished;" in Matthew you have it simply referred to, so here again you have no discrepancy. But supposing he had not said "Jesus, when he had cried again," I have laid it down as a fact, that when you have four true independent witnesses relating the same event some enter largely and minutely into the fact, the other witness relates the fact not in the same words, or at the same length, but he does not contradict the others, because a contradiction would be, for me to say that I was in London and at Halifax at the same hour of the day and the same day of the month, 1859. So here you have four bearing independent testimony to the life and deeds of Christ, the one tells you this fact and the other the other fact. Sometimes the three or the four narrators repeat the same fact and the same circumstances. Then at other times one only narrates the fact and the others are silent, but does their silence give a contradiction to what the others tell you? I affirm this with regard to all *the trash* brought on with regard to the discrepancies, it is not worth a rotten nut-shell,—nay, it is not worth anything. It has been disposed of again and again. Like Banquo's ghost it may start up and stare us in the face, but it is poor shade only, the ghost of old exploded objections, that have again and again been disposed of, to be again and again futilely reiterated. Why, with regard to many matters brought up this evening, every child in your sabbath schools are well instructed in these matters. With reference to the plucking out an eye, or the cutting off a hand, every child seven years old knows what that means.

I affirm it—perhaps you that don't use your bibles may have got into a state of obfuscation of intellect on these matters—every child understands it whose teacher properly instructs him in scripture history, scripture harmony, and scripture interpretation. Why not use a metaphor? Don't we employ metaphors continually in our conversations? and the cutting of a right hand or limb, or the plucking out of an eye are metaphors. It is a pity I should have to explain matters so very simple. The Saviour teaches what every one is conscious of—that man is possessed of two powers, passion and principle. The passions demand gratification, and his principles have been given him to control his passions. These passions sometimes would assume such consequence and predominance in his internal life as to be as it were a right eye, a right arm, or a right limb, and the crushing back these hellish passions, and the straining himself to climb—what to him in that state of mind would be a hill of difficulty—in the path of virtue would be metaphorically tantamount to plucking out a right eye, as it regards the mental pain endured; but will it not be better for him to suffer the anguish and torture of his lower life and not suffer in the higher and nobler parts of his nature,—his conscience and his moral sense,—that which is the grander and nobler part of being? What is Jesus Christ teaching? He is teaching that man possessed of a compound nature, body and soul, has to do with two worlds—this world of time, and the other world towards which we are hastening each successive moment. In that world this book teaches us that according to character *here* shall we be judged, and have our everlasting doom settled *there*, and unalterably fixed for ever. We are taught that the gratification of the passions demoralizes our nature, degrades our being, enslaves our minds, drags us down, ever down, and crushes out all those virtues that God has given us, and sets us—as moral shipwrecks—adrift upon the wild and turbulent waves of desolation and death, by which we are washed down the gulf of temporal to the sea of eternal death and despair. On the other hand, the cultivation of the virtues, the subjugation of every faculty to the moral principles enunciated in these gospels, gives the power to ascend the thorny path I have described, which, though severe whilst we do it, “enduring hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” whilst we perform

a struggle as through bloody sweat and crowns of thorns, still the renown and triumph will be worthy of the struggle—therefore, I endorse what Jesus teaches, that it will be better for us to cut off the right hand or the right limb, and go to heaven, as 't were, maimed, and halt, and blind, rather than have two eyes, and two arms and legs, to be cast into hell fire. The teaching of Jesus Christ is explicitly and unexceptionably moral, and I have waited—but have waited in vain—to have pointed out to me anything immoral in the teaching of Jesus Christ. What Jesus Christ teaches us is that we should avoid all evil; whether it be social or whether it be moral evil, and that we shall follow all that is good. This he exemplifies in his life, and this he expresses in all his words, and the man that takes up the new testament, and reads it candidly and ingeniously, will not be able to come to any other conclusion upon the matter. I will bring the new testament next to the test as it respects its salutary benefits to the savage islanders of Fejee, Owyhee, or any other of the Polynesian groups. There the man is taught to read: the Christian missionary even forms for these islanders a language, and he not only teaches them the truth of the Christian religion, but likewise those things that are concomitants to Christian truth, that go along with it, and follow in its train—civilization and the arts. The Fejee islander requires the knowledge of this book: does he become immoral, or any of the others become immoral, by the teaching of the bible? Did John Williams, the South Sea missionary,—the martyr of Erromanga,—did he teach immorality to the islanders of Fejee? How did he find them? Savages—naked—braining one another—blood and rapine, ferocity and barbarism characterizing these coral groups. Visit, then, those islanders when the new testament is the law to-day: go from island to island, where you see the chapel, the missionary, and the native teacher, and behold the difference. And am I to be told that Christianity teaches immorality, when, on the very face of the assertion, it carries its own refutation, and entombs itself in infamy and scorn? Nay! nay! let us hear common sense. Nay! nay! let us hear words of discretion and sound judgment. The teachings of Jesus Christ not calculated to benefit humanity? The answer comes booming over the waves of the Great South Sea, comes booming over the line, and brings back the tidings

to the shores of Britain—you sent us the teachings of Christ, and we have an everlasting debt of gratitude to pay you for sending us this blessed and this glorious boon. We may return to this again. And now, with regard to the last words of Jesus Christ;—I should have thought it was totally unnecessary to have answered this again. It seems to me as if it were a plain shutting of the eyes to the truth, as it may be clearly seen, “so that he who runs may read.” Are we not told that “*the Son of Man* came to seek and save that which was lost?” Are we not told that *this Son of Man* was a *man* of sorrow, and acquainted with grief? Are we not told that he was the son of Mary, *the reputed son* of Joseph the Carpenter? Are we not told that he grew as a child in wisdom and in favor both with man and God his father too? Are we not told that *from* childhood he grew *to* manhood? Are we not told with regard to that *manhood* it had all the distinguishing peculiarities of our own manhood, “bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh?” And need I be asked, was it God bled and suffered on the cross? It was “the man Christ Jesus,”—that man hypostatically united to the Godhead. My body and my soul are united: but none of the composition of my body enters into the composition of my soul nor my soul into my body. The Godhead and manhood of Christ are distinct, separate, and apart. It was the man that suffered: it was the Godhead that upheld the man beneath the avalanche of his sorrows, when he bore the sins of our race. If we reject all belief in him it is not forced upon us to believe: Christianity as a system knows of no force,—no compulsion,—it knows nothing of constraint and coercion,—no, not in anything. It invites,—it persuades; and with regard to the persons to whom reference was made just now, they were not Christians. Had they been Christians they would not have persecuted. Had they been Christians they would have carried out the precepts and principles of the bible—the teachings of Jesus from its first to its last letter. And besides, why bring me these apostates and perverters of Christianity, when you can bring no single instance of a Baptist body or a Baptist church persecuting any one—then only the blow reaches me. Who was the first in modern times that taught practically the principles of equality,—of the right of every man to think and act for himself? ROGER WILLIAMS, OF RHODE ISLAND? Atheists

being amenable only to God, were permitted the fullest exercise of their freedom, and therefore that blow passes harmlessly by me—for *this* is my law book, I know no teacher but Jesus: I know of no legislation but the legislation of the new testament: I repeat it again,—pure and simple, unadulterated, uncorrupted, and unmixed with the traditions and additions of men. Jesus cursed the fig tree: my friend seems not to consider one very plain, and one very palpable fact, *that there was a curse*, a primitive curse pronounced—“cursed is the ground for thy sake,” “and cursed is every one that continueth not in all that is written in the book of the law to do it.” Man is under that ban and curse, and Jesus came to remove that curse by taking it upon himself, “because cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree,” and when you referred just now to the crucifixion you referred to the blessing that came to remove the curse, to have lost Eden restored and “paradise regained.” If you reject it, it is not forced or coerced upon you. It is at your option whether you have it or have it not. It is for you to stand and abide by the consequences, *without any constraint put upon the freedom of your will*. There are other matters which have been referred to, with respect to the alleged immorality of the teachings of the gospel, which I myself must plainly tell you I cannot perceive. When I am told that the teachings of the gospel are immoral, I am waiting to hear some immoral precept taught, some immoral precept enjoined, for our obedience and for our commission. Are we told to steal? We are told not to steal. Are we told to lie? We are told to speak the truth, one to another. Are we told to be fraudulent? We are told to “provide things honest in the sight of God and man.” I will wait to hear something of its immorality; but I utter it again, that before this matter is made out, before this subject has got the least shadow of a shade of proof, I must have some immoral precept enjoined by Christ—instead of which you have the purest morality, the plainest principles of equity taught here throughout the length and breadth of “the lively oracles.” I do not wish at present to enter into any new matter. With reference to the Sin against the Holy Ghost, I certainly could have entered upon that, but I wish to hear my friend, who has told us he is going to give his opinion on that *questio vexata*. Of course there have been so many opinions on that subject, an

added one will much please me, and if it tends to throw any light upon it there are a great many who will feel peculiarly gratified and obliged ; and when he has told you his, I shall perhaps give you my opinion on that sin—as he has adventured his. Had he asked mine first, I should possibly have given it him. But it does not belong to the question in debate.

ICONOCLAST: Then my friend gives up the 1800 years stream which I traced through the church, through the popes, through the emperors, through the councils, and through the people, and says none of these are Christians ; so that the 1800 years stream is a myth, and was but a beautiful figure of speech, because if all those I have referred to are not Christians I would be much obliged to him if he would tell me where the Christians were during the 1800 years. My friend says I must not quote Borgia as a Christian. It is Borgia and such as he that you give as evidence for the gospels, and are you to have them for one purpose and not another ? They are your succession of fathers following one on another—one elected by another, and yet you tell me these ill fruits could not come from the book. I tell you it is so, and that they do come from the book. My friend tells you of the 1800 years stream flowing down from that time, and I am pointing to the stream of life as exhibited in the world's history. Where is the hidden rivulet, trickling for ages unseen and unheard of, now to be brought as an evidence of the beneficial influence of this book ? Where ? in what country ? in what part of the world ? and amongst what people ? You told me in your speech, of the Protestants who broke out from the Catholic priests, who would not allow them to use the book : it was the very Catholic priesthood whom you evidenced, whom you say kept the book safely, and whom you are obliged to quote from for your proof of its preservation in purity to the present day. After all, my friend forgot one caution, and used some language in reference to an argument, which I am sure must have slipped from him, viz.,—"that it was not worth more than a rotten nutshell." I cannot imagine a believer in God, a believer in the wisdom of God, saying that to the argument upon the passage when God said he was forgotten by himself, he does not "deem an answer necessary, as the argument is of no more weight and value than a rotten

nutshell." Was Jesus God or not? and who are you here claiming the right to say, now he is man, and now he is God, as it suits your purpose or weak intellect in dealing with the matter? to say now Jesus withers a fig tree, then he is God; now he dies upon the cross, then he is man? Who gave you the right thus to interpret this book for me? Have you a special revelation enabling you to determine, that then he was man, and that then he was God? You told me he fasted in the wilderness as man. How do you know it? You told me he withered the fig tree as God. How do you know it? You tell me he died as man. How again do you know this, and by what rule am I thus to veer and change? Is it not that you veer and change every time the difficulty to be grappled with is too strong for you to answer and overcome? You tell me that the curse was always upon the ground from the first age, and you tell me that Jesus came to remove the curse, and give me as a proof that he cursed the fig tree and withered it away, because the original curse had not done it. This is the argument; but Jesus did not wither the fig tree because God had cursed the ground: he tells you it was because it had not the fruit upon it which he expected, and which he knew was not there before he went to it. My friend must not say these arguments have been answered again and again. The burden is on him to answer them now, and not to shelter himself by saying that others have answered them. He is here to answer and give us those reasons which shall convince us as they have convinced him, and not to tell us that men of intellect should be forced to bow to that to which the intellect of man cannot give credence. My friend says Jesus did not mean cut off the arm, pluck out the eye. I do not know what he meant, but I know what he said, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life than, having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched." Is that all allegorical? If allegorical, is hell untrue? Is it all a fable, or is it all literal? Is that hell a literal hell? And if a literal hell, why dare you argue that the others are allegorical? and have you any foundation for the meaning you choose to give to them? If I were judging this as I read Shakespere, Milton, Parker, or Rousseau, then I should know what I am dealing with. You tell me it does not force itself upon man, but at the present moment, force or not, I am threatened with the law of England because I will not receive it, and I am threatened with damnation by preachers because I will not receive it. Tell me it is not forced upon us! why a child in suckle, before it can lisp at all, is taught to clasp its little hands in prayer to Jesus, before it knows what Jesus means: it is taught to admit and believe that which grown men refuse to receive. When my friend sat down he had not answered my objections. He had not told you the morality of the destruction of the swine, or of the moral precept it taught. He had not told you the morality of the doctrine of "setting father against the son, the son against the father, the daughter against the mother, the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Had he told you of the morality in that chapter of Luke which again he says is a parable, of a man having his enemies brought and slain before him? I deny again it is a parable, and again my friend should not shelter himself under a cloak, for it is one, that because the meaning of the parable of the good Samaritan is good, therefore is the teaching of Jesus good also. If this be a parable, what does it mean? What does the Lord mean when he put these words in the lord's mouth, "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." What is the meaning of the words? If they are allegorical, show us how the love is hidden under murder. We can only see the slaughter, and not the beautiful thought hidden under it. Let us grapple with the subject like men; and when we ask for common-sense, do not, with deficiency of common-sense, tell us children understand it. We know well, and none better than my friend, that the grown and developed brain comprehends better than the childish brain. We want facts for men, and not for children, which priests teach in the school and

pulpit, but rarely come on the platform to explain. My friend has set a noble example in coming here. But he must bring facts and reasons to show us that we are wrong in the conclusions at which we have arrived. I have to deal with the sin against the Holy Ghost; but I shall have to remind my friend that he has omitted many things, before I refer to that. In the first place, I remind him he evidently thinks he has answered everything, and sits down satisfied when there is much to do. What morality is there in Jesus, who pretended to quote prophecies in favour of himself, which prophecies my friend admits only stand in the same relation as a quotation from Shakespere at the head of a chapter of a book at the present day? Either they are true prophecies, or Jesus was a false man. I have shown the text and proved they are not prophecies, *ergo*, Jesus was a false man; and he who twisted the words to impart a false meaning was not a moral man, and that immorality underlies all his doctrines. My friend again quoted Origen. I would ask him in his next speech to quote the 20th* chapter of Matthew and 12th verse, which induced Origen to do that which man never should do—to do that which deprived him of his manhood in doing it. I require a distinct answer to this. I will now deal with the unpardonable sin—the sin against the Holy Ghost, referred to in the 12th Matthew and 31st verse, where you find these words: “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come.” Now, first, treating the matter upon the remark made by my friend, that many learned men have written upon it, and he should be glad to hear one more opinion added to the list, I ask, is it left so uncertain? Is it true that God condemns man for that which he knows not how to escape, because he knows not the evil he has committed?—is that a doctrine to benefit mankind? With this unpardonable sin, we have enough to drive men into madness by the fear of hell, as a punishment for a sin which they know not how to avoid. My friend, in his last speech, unconsciously struck the key when he told

* This should be chapter 19th, see page 144.

you of the primitive curse; he also told you of the unpardonable sin committed. For what was the ground cursed and the first man damned? For what, in your religion of love and mercy, have all the inhabitants of the world been cursed eternally? For that sin which God's vicegerents on earth have always regarded as unpardonable: for that sin which the tyrants of the world have never shown the slightest pardon for: for that sin which churches and priests have always united to punish: for that sin which religious men have always united in denouncing: for the sin of plucking off the tree the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. To get knowledge—that is the unpardonable sin. It strips away the veil from the temple; shows its rents and inconsistencies, and exposing its weaknesses, is never forgiven by the weak. I fear me that as I go still further, I and my friend shall differ still wider. What is the kingdom of heaven? What is held out as the glorious future to which we are all aspiring? What is this pinnacle, this summit of the mount, to be toiled for in mourning and in poverty of spirit? What shall we gain when we reach the summit? What shall we gain? Jesus has described. Have you read his description? Are you gladdened by it? Has it benefitted you? Take one view of it. A king invited a number of people to a marriage feast; first one would not come, and then another. Some more maltreated the servants. Then the king sent out into the highways to gather in all, directing the servants, to use the expressive words, to compel them to come in, good, bad, and indeed all, rich and poor, maimed and blind, from the hedges and ditches, and gather them in. And when the king of the feast came in, he saw one of the men who had not on a wedding garment, and asked him, why hast thou not on a wedding garment? The man, who had been compelled to come to the feast unprepared, was speechless. What could he say? He had had no choice whether he should come or not. The king says, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen." Tell me the morality of that. God, the Father, making many children, and only a few intended for salvation. If there be anything degrading, it is that doctrine which tells you that God cursed man, and the very

ground on which he stands, fixed unpardonable sins to which he gives no clue, and then adds the kingdom of heaven, for which "many are called, but few chosen." That heaven in which Lazarus is described as seeing a man in hell: the man in hell, writhing in bitter agony, cries, "Give me a drop of water to cool my parched tongue:" and Lazarus either does not or cannot. Could Lazarus be happy in heaven and see a miserable human being writhing in torment in hell? None but a selfish fiend, and not a man, could go to heaven and see millions of brethren writhing in torment in hell: one, perhaps, a brother from the same womb, who had sucked the same breast, was taught to speak by the same tongue; one in heaven, the other in hell; not because of their deeds or character, but because one could not believe and the other did believe. Is this calculated to benefit humanity? Does it not require arguing and dealing with? If it is urged over and over again, should not my friend deal with it? and should not he give you some proof when he says this is literal and this is allegorical? Remember what he has made allegorical. He has made the whole account of the temptation into a vision. He has made the whole of that from a reality into a dream, and with equal right I may say, the whole is visionary and incredible, and only in dreams will men accept it, and have palmed upon them at first what they would reject in open waking life. My friend has no right to turn upon the whole of those who preceded him in the past 1800 years, and say they were not Christians. He asks for missionary exploits. Have you read the blue books of the House of Commons? for you will there read of missionary exploits which do not agree with the accounts of Fejee. I have read of missionaries who, by fraud and pretence, have stolen land from ignorant savages. I have heard it alleged that the missionaries in Hindostan did more by their cavillings, tyrannies, and bad conduct, to bring about the late miserable contest between the two populations, than almost any other matter at the time. (A Voice: Prove it.) You have some proof of the bad conduct of missionaries, and I think my friend will be wiser than you on that head, and will not ask for more. If he needs me to prove that missionaries, pretending to teach the bible to ignorant savages, have misconducted themselves, and have been grossly fraudulent, immoral, and deceitful, I undertake to do it in

another debate with him; but it will be for him to take up that point of the issue if he likes. Now my friend says that I am only to attack the Baptist form of Christianity. Indeed! I think my friend defended the four gospels, and everything that had resulted from those four gospels, and for him to tell me that Roger Williams is the one I am to judge of and from, is to tell me that a good many hundred years after Christ passed away without real Christianity being in existence at all. But will the majority of Christians accept my friend's definition of Christianity? Oh no. Why the very thing he says himself is a proof that he and I agree in this book—for were Jesus God himself, who came on earth to make this revelation to man, then never believe that he would have allowed Christians to be split into a thousand sects, each denying the Christianity of the other. Is this the effect of God's mission? My friend says there is no immorality in the book; but the very doctrine of belief taught in that which is incredible, is so immoral that it wants nothing more to overthrow the whole. And then the depravity inculcated when you teach men to bow the head to wrongs which they possess the power to redress: this doctrine is so immoral that it requires no other matter to denounce it. My friend quoted Emerson, and I will give you a grand and mighty thought of that Emerson, on self-reliance—it is the noblest gem which, worn upon the forehead of a man, like a diadem in a king's crown, shineth out glitteringly and resplendently, placing him in the front rank of his fellows. He said, Never bow the head to the past, but stand up heaven facing, thinking fearlessly your thoughts, not imitating simply the men gone by, but insisting for yourselves, striking out for yourselves good and true thoughts, begetting and followed by noble actions, built upon the knowledge of the past and present, which lay great facts before you. This is morality worth a thousand sermons on the Mount. To tell a man when a man smites him on one cheek, to turn to him the other also—to whom does it apply? If you happened to smite a Baptist or a Baptist minister, I fancy you would at once be handed over to the police. If a man take your coat, give him your cloak also. Is this morality? Nay, nay, to quote again from Shelley that doctrine of passive, manly resistance, in which man, linked with his fellow man, crushes the tyranny of the world:—

"Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest, close and mute,
With folded arms, and looks which are
Weapons of an unvanquished war."

Would he say, if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also? No, he would say, watch the coming blow, draw not the warrior's blade yourselves, but if it is flashed on high against you, then draw the blade, and guard your head, for you yourselves are men, and have an equal right with every other man in the world in which you live. But this doctrine is different from that which tells you not to resist the blow, but to weep and mourn: mourn for the wrongs you dare not guard against, hoping you will have comfort some day for injuries you dare not redress. But my friend tells me, and I believe with truth, that he cannot see the immorality of this. Is not this a proof of a good and great intellect—for he has a great one—perverted by education, and warped round by a creed, like a plaster cast, drying in him every good and noble thought, and preventing any good and noble thought breaking out from him or entering at all, until that creed is shattered.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: If I want to know where hell upon earth is, I need not go far; I go to the atheist's black and desolate heart, which is hell begun—ante-dated in this world,—premonitory and ominous of its more terrific consequences in the world to come. Tell me not that we know not the future vengeance and retribution awaiting the unbeliever. We have seen it. We have witnessed it. We have seen it in the fiend-like eye as it rolled in frenzy and horror with compunction and remorse—like Prometheus with the vulture at his heart, preying upon his vitals. We have witnessed the curse darkening upon him premonitory of the dark fate awaiting him in eternity for his denial of the true, and his practice of the false. Now with regard—I return to it again—with regard to the popes and councils brought on in reply to me, what have I to do with the popes, with the councils?—they would have burnt me alive as they did my forefathers: with the Borgias? with the men, who, during the middle ages uttered their anathemas against my progenitors, the Waldenses and Albigenses—my progenitors in creed and in practice? the Anti-Christian men who drove us into the fastnesses and gorges of Piedmont and the wild

Alpine solitudes, where they were compelled to hide themselves—men who were without fault and without reproach—men who resisted not with physical force? We believe not in carnal weapons and in physical force. No, we are the disciples of Jesus; we are willing to abide by the holy principles he has laid down. Our armour is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, the helmet of hope, and the shield of faith. We live and die—we stand—we move by the laws of our Lord Jesus. Truth alone is our weapon, helmet, and shield; our cuirass, bow, and spear. 'T is with this we battle against error; 't is with this we have advanced to be the conquerors of the world; 't is with this we march onwards, till popery on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, shall be scattered to the ends of the earth. An intelligent Christianity raises men to be worthy of the God that made them, and doing honour to Christ who moulded them into his life, pattern, principle, and character. I repeat it again, I have no proof of the immorality of the sayings, much less of the immorality of the life of Jesus. I have no immoral injunctions brought forwards against the four gospels. I repeat it a thousand, a million times: but I shall repeat the millionth time in vain! for it will not—because it cannot—be forth-coming. If it could be, where was the Paganism which it destroyed? the Pantheism, Polytheism, and idolatry which it vanquished? Where the Judaism? Where was that mendacious treacherous Jew, Josephus, who suppressed all information regarding it? And again I refer to the paper of Thomas de Quincy, with regard to the Essenes, or Primitive Christians, that must be answered, or the debate is mine. As to the credibility of the four gospels; we have Andrews Norton for the first time repudiated! What next, I should like to know? Andrews Norton sneered at! What is going to come after this? Sit down I pray, and give us the proof,—let us have the book—page for page,—chapter for chapter,—paragraph for paragraph,—that shall remove one single fact so well attested in this book from its first to its last page with regard to the credibility of the four gospels. There are different little matters which I consider remarkably frivolous, which I shall pass over, concerning the passage about the swine. We are not told aught of the demoniac among the tombs out of whom the demons were cast; who sat at the feet of Jesus clothed in his right mind; and we are not told

it was an illicit practice of the jews to feed swine at all; and that it was doubtless a judicial punishment inflicted on them, because as jews they were strictly prohibited from eating swine's flesh; and they traded illegally in it with the gentiles in the neighbourhood. We are told of the man who is seated at the feet of Jesus clothed in his right mind. Is there no mark from my opponent of admiration for this? And is this not to be credited to the love and goodness and benignity and compassionateness of him "who went about doing good." Where are the maimed he made to walk? the blind he made to see? the deaf he made to hear? the lepers he cleansed? the demoniacs he restored to their gladsome families? Where are these? Not a word about these! No expression of commendation with regard to what was evidently good. I read just now J. J. Rosseau. Rosseau speaks in the highest admiration of the character of him of whom his very enemies in the days of his flesh said, "Never man spake like this man;" and of whom it was said "that he taught as one having authority, and not like the scribes and Pharisees." Take as an instance the following:—The Pharisees and scribes say this man eateth with publicans and sinners; *this man* "condescends to men of low estate;" *this man* does not look with haughty eye, and supercilious sneer on men lower than himself; and he does not seek to climb into the chief seats of the synagogues. Is there no word of commendation with regard again to this? Again, concerning the act which Origen is said to have done, if he did it at all,—it was not an act of immorality, it was an act of weakness;—it was an act to prevent him from immorality;—but it was over-leaping the bounds of caution, but e'en "that failing leaned to virtue's side." It was an excess of caution, and too few—too little by half—have we of such caution, and such prudence, which prompted him to this needless act. This is but a solitary instance of a man mistaking and misapplying the words of the New Testament. If he mistakes the words, are the words blameworthy for his error? The act was that of a mistaken though otherwise good and holy man: and again about the woman in Ireland, who wanted to gnaw her flesh, because she was insane, and because she misunderstood and misinterpreted the poetic words of scripture—words which any child in any Sunday school can understand—and words which, when understood intelligently and legitimately, were not

capable of being misunderstood by even the captious speaker himself, nor by any one in the whole audience,—*it is the mere cooking up of a case*—and an endeavour to make out a cause where there is no ground for a cause at all—a *ruse* to invalidate the truth and moral force of Christianity. Then as it respects the missionaries of the Feejee Islands,—the missionaries of India, Africa, and of every other part of the globe, I assert that the foul calumny which has been cast upon their cause and character—the unfounded assertions, made against these noble-hearted, these self-denying philanthropic men—those pioneers of civilisation to distant climes and distant times is very bad indeed—very bad indeed. Ask the mission boards of London when a young man offers himself for mission work, where does he volunteer to go? I mention this as an instance of the self-disinterestedness of men who sacrifice their lives for the good and welfare of their fellow-men in distant heathen lands and distant barbarous climes. Do they speak of some salubrious or healthy climate? No, it is to unhealthy Sierra Leone—the grave of missionaries—that they ask to go. I state this as an instance and proof of the noble-mindedness and heroism of these saintly men; a brave and sacred band. They should require none to defend them—their lives are their truest and best defence. I am proud that I am so highly honoured as to be a humble pleader and apologist for Christian missionaries, and permitted to stand forth as the champion of these great and good men, both past and now, both dead and living. Oh! I pity much that man who can speak a word against such men as Dr. Livingstone, who goes to the interior of Africa; who can speak against Moffat, the lion-hearted; and John Williams, the noble martyr of the Island of Erromanga. Oh! I pity the soul of the man that can utter a single word of depreciation against these the best of our philanthropic Englishmen—the purest of our English blood. It is a pity indeed that we have fallen upon such evil times as these; that men can stand forward to blacken the characters of these the pioneers of civilisation, “who open the gates of mercy to mankind.” Why not themselves do something for the amelioration of the savage? Why not—instead of uttering such blasphemy against the pure, the holy, and the true—why not go themselves and seek some place where they can devote their time, their labour, and their energies to raising their fellow-

men—bursting the manacles of the slave, and proving to us in deed and in truth, they are the lovers of their species, come to establish “peace upon earth and good will towards men?”

ICONOCLAST: What should you think if the “black-hearted atheist” had pretended to quote from a book that which the book repudiated? What should you think if the “black-hearted atheist” had pretended to advance in support of his atheism, under the name of Professor Norton, principles which are not principles advocated by Norton? What should you think of the man who read a paragraph in the words of Paley which is not in this book of Norton’s, and which this man puts before you under another colour? You will remember that we were told of the Shepherd of Hermas, we were told of St. Barnabas, and of Clement, as proofs of the genuineness of the four gospels, on Norton’s authority, and yet they are placed by this very Norton, in his appendix to the writings of the apostolical fathers, where he says he has “not referred to them as affording proof of the genuineness of the gospels.” I leave that to my friend, and I am glad my black heart has not made me manufacture any proofs of that which I supported or advanced. I read a passage from Papias, and it will be for my friend to produce the authority which he read from. The book he read from had a little label on one side, and quoted the Shepherd of Hermas as reliable authority, which that work (Norton) does not give. Now my friend has not told us what the 12th verse of the 20th of Matthew means.* I am glad he has not dared to read it yet. He admits Origen did something wrong from weakness and over-caution, and he regrets there are not more instances of such caution. But would it not be better to tell us what the meaning of the text was, and show that Origen did something which it does not recommend, and that Jesus has not recommended; and tell us how the acute Origen was led into the error? But I say weakness is not moral, and therefore I attack belief because it weakens the brain, while thought strengthens it. What are we to deal with? A series of fictions which the black heart of the atheist has invented? Have we invented that fire which is never quenched? Did we speak to men and tell them to cut off their arms and pluck out their eyes in language they could not otherwise comprehend? And when we find a number of

* 19th Matthew, 12th verse.

swine driven into the sea without reason, or without excuse, do we find an owner for them for the purpose of saying that owner has disobeyed the Lord? You have not the slightest proof the owner of these swine was a jew. It does not say so in the book, and if it did there is no reason Jesus should send the demons into the swine, and drown them without the slightest warning or enquiry. If Jesus had done it as a punishment to the jews it would have been so stated. My friend says religion never flashed the sword. What did Jesus mean in saying those who had not a sword were to sell their garments and buy one? Is not that immoral? My friend did not deal with the sin against the Holy Ghost, so I suppose he admits my explanation. I denounce your book from the very fact that it tends to destroy knowledge, and from the very fact that it tends to destroy truth. It destroys knowledge because it leads man to prostrate reason before the unknown and unknowable, and teaches him to submit to the iron will of the oppressor, when the oppressor is never more than man, and in his oppression is less than the man whom he oppresses. Instead of saying stand up in conscious right and truth—right making might—and cast off the yoke that is upon you—instead of saying, you are chained, dash off your fetters, it says, "If a man strike thee on the one cheek turn to him the other." But true morality says, nerve your arms, strengthen your hands, and snap across your knees the fetters upon them, and stand out free before all the world. The question to deal with is this—I undertook to show that the history of Jesus is not credible, and that his doctrines were not calculated to benefit humanity. Is it credible that God on the cross deemed himself forsaken by himself? Be he man or God you have not ventured to tell us what these words mean. Do they mean rejoicing and hope, instead of despair and disappointment at being forsaken by himself? Tell me what they mean, and how these words and their teaching are beneficial to humanity? And how can I venture to hope that as he was forsaken by himself on the cross, I, in the like straight shall not be forsaken by him? If you have an unaccountable, mysterious, and ne'er to be forgiven sin, what is it? Tell me that I may grapple with it and avoid it. You charge me with slandering such men as Livingstone. It is not true. I admire and revere such a man, and I would pay my tribute of admiration to him who

goes into the desert to snatch fresh facts and give them to his fellow-men. That he has done good to man I admit; but it is entirely apart and out of his religion. Nay! with some of these facts I will confront and deal with you, and show you the fallacy of the book we are debating on. You have challenged me to the test. Shall I bring the records of those scenes which disgraced our courts, a little while ago, when missionaries sued each other for libel, and each proved in justification the other to be an immoral man? I attack not the good, the great, the true, and the noble. The good, the great, the true, and the noble are so out of their religion, beyond their religion, and above their religion, and would be great and pure despite all religions and creeds. Do you believe God has given man a religion insufficient for man? Do you believe God has given a scheme of salvation not to save man? Do you believe God is not able to save man? And if you do not believe all this; do you believe he can save man and will not? Tell me which of the monstrosities I have to deal with under the shape and guise of moralities. Let us deal with it fearlessly, nobly, and truly; and instead of saying we have nothing immoral to deal with, tell me why he cursed the fig tree, tell me why he destroyed the swine, tell me why he gave a command to men which he cannot justify, and tell me why, if he did not advocate the resorting to physical force, he said "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay before me." If he is so good and loving, tell me why he himself said he came not to send peace but a sword. A religion of love should knit together man to man and woman to woman, instead of which he says, "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." True happiness is this: the knowing that the inhabitants of the world form one great household, in which all are fellow-workers; that humanity is one chain, whose links extend all round the earth, and only here and there broken by churches and creeds, which rust them and break them, and keep them apart from another. I appeal to you, believing in the unity of man, that he who believes in this can never be happy till he feels throughout existence one equality and one desire for truth must be the standard aimed at and received. Man never can be raised so long as he believes some are damned to hell and eternal torments. A wise man knows he may

strike out the facts of existence a bright spark, which shall show men the way to be truly happy and truly wise, by giving to one another and receiving from one another their happiness and wisdom. Our religion is not one which says, believe not and be damned, but a religion affecting the thought and development of men—a religion of making the best of what we have here: living truly, nobly, and manfully, knowing that living well will not be any bar to living hereafter, if any hereafter, of personal identity there is beyond the grave. He asks me why we do not go forth as missionaries? I am a missionary here, not defying the martyrdom of John Williams, but defying a martyrdom under which I have no wish to fall. I would rather live and erect the banner of truth, and show that truth with manliness must force its way: a powerful agent is this banner of truth—pure and manlike, if not godlike, with strong arms will it pass on its way through the world, despite priestcraft and ignorance. My friend has described me as a black-hearted atheist. I confess myself an atheist, but in what is my heart black? I believe in the nobleness and truth of humanity. I believe that poverty of spirit, misery, blind credence, and eternal torment belong to the past, and are fostered by ignorant creeds which I am trying to make men rise against and throw off. I would cut the cords which bind man and drown him in the ocean of life, and would release him from customs which sink him down, and which enslave him despite himself.

A vote of thanks was awarded to the Chairman.

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4, 1859.**PROPOSITION (CONTINUED.)**

**"THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST NOT CALCULATED TO
BENEFIT HUMANITY."**

MR. JENNINGS in the Chair.

ICONOCLAST: Mr. Chairman and friends: As I laid down in the opening of the debate upon this portion of the question, much was involved in whether or no the four gospels were credible. It will be my duty to-night to sum up not only the last two nights' debates, but also the omissions in the two preceding nights, for the purpose of showing you I have substantially succeeded upon the whole of the question in hand, because if I have succeeded in satisfying you that there is only one point of incredibility in the whole of the four gospels, then that one point will be sufficient to bear down and carry away all before it: because that which is incredible—that which cannot be believed, but which requires belief in it—can never be of benefit to humanity. Now what have we to deal with? The four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the authorship of which my friend has endeavoured to corroborate and substantiate, and establish, by telling us of Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr—not by telling us what they themselves say, or by reading from their books? Oh, no. By reading from any known author who quoted from them? Oh, no. But the book from which he read, although four nights have passed and gone—although I have challenged him repeatedly to name the author, that we should know how to deal with it,—yet we know not yet with whom we have to deal. My friend has not told you who it is. He has told you it

is not Lardner, and he has told you it is not Paley, because he knew I was prepared to confute both the truth of Lardner and Paley. He said something which led any man to believe it was Norton, and held me up strongly to reprobation for daring to deal with the learned Norton. What happens? When we take Norton, we find that Norton does not quote Barnabas, that Norton does not quote the Shepherd of Hermas, and that Norton does not quote Polycarp, or Clement of Rome, in support of the authenticity of the four gospels; but puts them in a distinct part of the book, and tells us he does not refer to them as authorities. What then is the book from which my friend quotes? He knew that I charged forgery on the works of Justin Martyr, whom he quoted. Why did not he say in opening, with a candid spirit, I quote from such and such a work, and from such and such a page of Justin Martyr, that you may have the opportunity of seeing whether it is true or not? If he do so to-night, it will not be the time and place. Four nights has he allowed to pass, and to bring in any works of Justin Martyr, if he does so, to bring in any works of Ignatius and Polycarp, if he does so, to bring in any work of the Shepherd of Hermas, if he does so, would only be to tell you that he brings them at the eleventh hour, that one should not have the opportunity of dissecting and sifting them. Why were we not told from whom he quoted? To say that Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr say so and so, is merely using so many words that mean nothing, until we know where and how it was said. He has not denied, and not denying has admitted my charge, that at least two-thirds of the works attributed to Justin Martyr, had been demonstrated to be forgeries. He has not denied, and not doing so, has admitted my accusation that Paley had foisted on Papias that which Eusebius does not pretend to say he wrote: and I challenge him to give the work from which he quoted, which in speaking of Papias, said that Papias was a hearer of John. That is the work I want. I know not who it is: let me have it, and then I will demonstrate its falsity. And tell me if it would not have been far more just, and far more in support of his cause and of truth had he given it me at the first—and not have allowed four nights to pass away—that I might have torn it to shreds before you. We therefore rest without the slightest corroborative evidence in support of the four gospels. My friend

attempted by a 1800 years' stream to bring it down to you, but that stream under the meridian light of the sun of reason, putrified like the muddy Thames, and showed it in all its loathsome rottenness. He repudiated the stream when we carried it to its source through the church, through the people, or through the popes or emperors, and would have it not—but he would not tell where the riuilet was which his fertile imagination had magnified into a stream, when he traced it down for 1800 years. I must beg you to bear with me, much as I may offend you this evening, in dealing with this subject. My friend had next to enter upon the examination of the books themselves; and at the threshold, we met the genealogy, which in one book is contradicted by that in another; and in the third book is contradicted again. How does he deal with this? One he says is the genealogy of Joseph, and the other that of Mary; but he never told you whose genealogy that is in the old testament, which contradicts them both: nay more, he never told you why you are to read "Mary, the daughter of Heli," instead of "Joseph, the son of Heli;" and he never told you why, if the genealogy of Matthew be that of Joseph, why we have a genealogy given which has nothing to do with Jesus at all. On the very threshold of the book we meet with statements so absurd, that we are compelled to reject it the moment we open it; and I say that here you have failed, and can go no further until you have cleared these monstrosities away. It is not enough to say it has been answered over and over again; it is not enough to say that the argument is not worth a rotten nutshell; it is not enough to say that the black heart of the atheist has concocted it: we are reasoning men, and require a proper answer to the objections urged. What if learned men have answered them before: what was the answer? Are we to be satisfied because a man who lived over 300 years ago was satisfied? Does our salvation or damnation rest upon what Paley knew, or Lardner believed? No, but upon ourselves, and upon our own belief, to be formed on the evidence brought before us. With the Annunciation how has he dealt? He has not told you how it was God's message to Mary so failed, that she did not know, when she brought her son to Simeon for the purposes of the law, she did not know what he meant when he said that her son should be a light to lighten the Gentiles. Nay more, she

had forgotten it when her son told her that he must be about his Father's business. My friend has not told you yet anything satisfactory about the date of Christ's birth. It is true he told us that he was born in the year 750 from the building of Rome: but upon whose authority he has not yet let us know. If his own, it may be good, but not sufficient. If he quote from the unknown book, whose author's name is not given, then the author being proven false, we have no respect for, and can scarcely give him credence for his other quotations. But if he have 500 authors all agreeing, I have read you a long list of men in the church all disagreeing as to this date. Nay more: supposing he had explained it, and settled the date, it would not be enough, for I have charged that the facts in Luke place the date of Jesus' birth after Herod's death; whilst Matthew places it before that event. With that he must grapple, and it will not do for him to say that he has not time to spare. Five nights we have grappled with this subject, and the time in hand my friend has found more than sufficed for his purpose, and I am bound to take it that he avoids the matters because he knows an answer cannot be given. He has not attempted to explain the flight into Egypt, and what Luke meant when he fixed certain events after the birth, so that the flight would not have taken place at all. With regard to the baptism of which he spoke as a monument, he has not told you one word to confute my assertion that baptism in the Ganges was practiced long before the Christian era; but all he says is, tell me of a baptism in the name of the holy three? Why Vishna, Siva, and Brahma, the holy three, existed long before your Mosaic religion, and Christianity long before Christians ever dreamt of a trinity at all. My friend, in dealing with the temptation, says Jesus fasted as a man, and then he tells us that the temptation was a vision—*ergo*, Jesus did not fast at all. We must have something better on the point than this. Did Jesus fast? and if so, when did the dream begin and end? We read of it in this book as a literal account, and have nothing to make it a dream and vision: nothing but your reason, which compels you to make it a dream, because it would never have occurred but in vision to a man whose waking senses were not at work. My friend has spoken of the fig tree, and says I have proved nothing of immorality in that. He says it was done by the power of God, and if by the

power of God, then for some good. Now, how do you know that Jesus fasted as a man, and then blasted the fig tree by the power of God? Tell me how it is, when you find facts clashing against your reason, you thus seek to avoid them? You tell me God's curse lay on the whole world and ground, and, therefore, was in existence when he came to curse a simple fig tree. You tell me Jesus came to remove that curse, and the proof you give me is that when he meets with an unoffending tree, which he knows has not fruit upon it, and which could not have fruit upon it, because he had prevented it from bearing figs, God, who has made himself hungry, not finding figs upon it, curses it because he cannot satisfy his hunger with fruit which he knew could not be upon it. My friend says it was God's act, and that God withered the tree and not man. Jesus went to it hungry and withered it; and if Jesus was God, Jesus who was hungry, was God also. It is for my friend to clear up these monstrosities which I lay before you. My friend sees no immorality in the demons being cast into the swine—and when, if I were inclined to be jocular, I should say he played the devil with the man's pigs—but I will not. He says it was intended as a punishment, because the owner was a Jew—but this book does not say so; and if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book (A voice—Amen.) We make allowances for our friend behind: he has only got a little too much of the spirit in him. Why were the swine destroyed as a punishment? The book does not say it was as a punishment to a disobedient Jew: my friend invents the crime to justify the punishment, because the act would be immoral on any other ground. As to the Gentiles and Samaritans, my friend has not told us why Jesus refused to preach to the Gentiles, and refused to allow the Samaritans to be preached to. Has he not had time to tell us why Jesus refused the Canaanitish woman's request, and then from her pertinacity, he gave her that which he should not withhold at all if he came to all the world. He has not told us why Jesus said he was sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not to the Gentiles—he holding that Jesus was sent to the whole world, has not told us what this meant. In dealing with the parables, he held up for admiration the parable of the good Samaritan; and he has found a meaning in every good word that Jesus spoke in

a parable—but when a bad word is shown, it is enough for him that Jesus spoke it in a parable, and murder needs no defence if it is inculcated in a parable. He takes it that goodness means goodness—and kindness means kindness in a parable—“but those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me”—that needs no explanation; and if it has any meaning, of course it means the reverse of what it says. Is it not too much of an explanation in itself? Is it not abhorrent to my friend's better feelings—to be avoided as a poisonous adder in our way, to touch which is to be stung, and to pass it by is the safest and wisest course. My friend has not attempted to defend any one of Jesus' misquotations of the old testament: he has not pretended that one word Jesus quoted as a prophecy of himself was so; and he has told us with a truth for which I admire him, and a candour for which I applaud him, that he does not regard these passages as prophecies at all; but he regards them in the same light as headlines from Shakespeare. Did Jesus quote Isaiah then incorrectly, and did Jesus manufacture the prophecies? If he did, he was a false man on whom we can place no reliance, and whose doctrines cannot be of benefit to humanity, because the man who manufactures prophecies to give authority to that which is of no authority, and to make and assume a pretence for that which was not a reality, cannot be a good man, and we are bound to reject him and have none of him. If he says he did not manufacture the prophecies, he will have to answer the texts that I gave, for in the four nights' discussion that have passed he has not answered them. Although he found nothing immoral in the book, he did not dare to read the text to which I adverted—the 19th chapter of Matthew, and 12th verse—and not the 20th chapter as I stated last evening. However, this misstatement made no difference to my friend, as he well knew the text I was referring to—and in defending Origen, “the learned, the powerful, and great pillar of the church, Origen,” he told us it was the weakness of Origen that made him do what he did. What, the powerful Origen weak? The learned Origen not to know what he was about? This man whom you have held up as a chief pillar and authority of the church, not know what he was doing? My friend says it was not immoral what he did, and says Origen did not do what Jesus said. What did

Jesus say? and what did Origen do? I dare my friend—if he says it is not immoral to read it before you, and to tell us the exact and precise meaning of the words—to tell us how Origen mistook them, and to tell us how such weakness as Origen was guilty of is not immorality, because I have submitted before you that weakness is immoral, that strength and manliness is morality, and that which is conducive to weakness tends to immorality. Weakness itself is immoral, especially when instanced in relation to a divine book, because Jesus should have given nothing susceptible of weakness. Jesus you tell us was God, and if God taught men weakness he taught men immorality; for God should give truth and manly strength, and if he fail in either of these he gives that which degrades man and does not raise him. My friend has not attempted to grapple with the description of heaven as given in the account of the wedding feast, and the parable of the rich man, and as I gave it in the picture of the son writhing in unutterable torture, while his mother was happy in heaven. He has not dared to refute my definition of the sin against the Holy Ghost, although I challenged him to do it; and although he had more time on his hands than he knew what to do with, he did not dare to say that I had misrepresented that sin. I charge upon him, if there be no other immorality in the book, that the holding out an unpardonable sin, which no man knows, and can guard against, is sufficient to degrade humanity. I tell him if the sin is what I say it is—and I challenge him to its disproof—then the book is immoral, for the whole purpose of it is to crush thought and knowledge, and destroy the morality of humanity. My friend has not followed me yet through the sermon on the mount, and he has not proven that poverty of spirit is a virtue, and that mourning is proper for a man. He tells us that part is allegorical: that Jesus did not mean cut off your arm, and pluck out your eye: but he does not dare to tell us whether the words in the same passage and the same verse, which speak of hell which is never quenched, and the worm which dieth not—he does not tell us whether that is to be believed or not. If one part is allegorical, what is the reason why we should say the other is not also allegorical? My friend has not dealt with the miracle of the 5,000, when more food was left than that with which they began. He has not again returned to the three days and

three nights. If he had, in the learned Sherlock's book which I have before me, he would have found a more plausible excuse than the one he made. Is he convinced, or is the argument so weak that it needs no further answer? Jesus himself gave it as a sign that as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth; and I tell him that Jesus was only in the earth, according to his own book, after sunset on Friday night, and that he was out of the grave before the Sabbath had ended: and I ask him how the whole of one day, and the whole of one night, with a very small portion (if any) of another day, and a very doubtful portion (if any) of another night, can make three days and three nights. It is for my friend to deal with, and straightforwardly and honestly meet the difficulty, and judge it according to its merits. He has led us to the crucifixion; he has told us the beautiful words which Jesus spoke upon the cross; he has told us that Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and although he has had so much time that he did not know what to do with it, and although two clear nights have elapsed since I drew attention to this, he has not ventured to tell us what Jesus meant when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He has not ventured to tell us how the picture of a dying God forsaken by himself can be of benefit to humanity. Let him grapple with it, and deal with it in its entirety, and do not let us ride off on a mere turn, and say it has been answered over and over again. And whilst he is dealing with the cross, let him tell us why the cross was an emblem in the hieroglyphic age, and is found on Egyptian obelisks, and in the very form in which it is afterwards copied on a Greek church, long before the crucifixion. For my friend to tell me it is not a religious emblem, is simply to say he knows nothing about it. When men knelt to the cross, when men brought offerings to the cross, and held it over dying men in the hieroglyphic age, was not that in connection with religion, or what was it? I challenge my friend to deal with it honestly and truly, to grapple with it as a man, truly and manfully, and let us have his opinion upon it whatever it may be. My friend has told you that the Lord's supper was another of the monuments of Christianity. Was it so? What was the supper in honour of Bacchus, and the

Elusian mysteries, but a Lord's supper, in which the body and blood of the gods was eat and drunk, and this proved by cuttings and inscriptions so ancient, that thousands of years have rolled over them before they saw the light of day, and yet my friend tells you this is a thing of 1800 years ago. What does the whole wind up with? It winds up, those who believe and are baptised shall be saved, and those that believe not shall be damned. Believe in what? What system is deduced before us? A system in which my friend tells you that for the sin of one man God damned that man and all the world for time to come; not only man, but the very ground on which he lived.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I am sorry to say that my friend has been premature in some portions of his address, and his remarks are not altogether founded on truth in the other part. With regard to the barren fig tree that was cursed, you will permit me to tell you one fact in natural history regarding fig trees: that where there are leaves there are, or should be, figs. I can give another fact regarding them from the writings of Pliny, who tells us that there is a certain kind of fig tree that bears figs almost all the year round. It is stated in Pliny, lib. 13, cap. 18, where you will find the fact recorded; but that is not my point with regard to my reply. I give that as a fact of natural history, tending to illustrate the matter, that where there are leaves, there are figs; the meaning in Matthew would be, that he found nothing thereon but leaves only, and Mark gives us a reason for that, that the time for figs was not yet,—that is, that the time of gathering figs was not yet, or had not—passed. It was a time when figs were ripe or fit to eat, or he would not have gone to it expecting to find them. But the time of gathering them had not passed, and it was to be presumed that they were still on the tree. This took place on the week of the passover, or in the beginning of April. Figs in Palestine are commonly ripe at the passover. The summer in Palestine begins in March, and it is no uncommon thing that figs should be eatable in April. It is said that they sometimes produce fruit the year round. He cursed the fig tree that should have borne fruit, and did this to teach a moral lesson to the Jews, that if they did not bear fruit, they should so wither away, and that prediction was

literally fulfilled 40 years afterwards, when the Roman eagle swooped down upon Jerusalem, and 1,100,000 Jews perished in the atrocities committed at Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine, whilst 900,000 were captives of war. So much for that matter. There has not been a single objection started but what has been satisfactorily answered, and can be so again. These flimsy objections start up, as I said before, like ghosts, to be laid down again, and will do so yet, till the demons of unbelief and scepticism are exorcised, and driven back to the infernal regions whence they came, no more to taint our world with the black-heartedness of atheism. (Groans and counter cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: I hope to be able to say at the close, as on the other nights, that the meeting began and concluded in good order and good temper. I must call attention to the notices on the wall. If Mr. Matthias makes statements incorrect and improper, Iconoclast will reply. I beg you to leave the matter to them.

The REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: The next point to which I have to reply is in reference to the antiquity of the Chinese and Hindoo chronologies. I hold in my hand, as it is necessary that I should refer to the books I quote from, "Is Christianity from God? a Manual of Christian Evidence:" by the Rev. John Cumming, D.D. The quotation is this, in the 192nd page, "Some philosophers have tried to prove from certain Hindoo and Chinese calculations of eclipses, that the earth is very much older than the Mosaic record represents it to be. The Chinese have one table, in which they calculate eclipses that happened many thousand years before the earth was created, according to the Mosaic history. But the celebrated La Place has demonstrated that these tables of the Chinese are downright forgeries, and that not a single particle of dependence is to be placed upon them. The same celebrated astronomer has demonstrated a most important fact. The earth moves round the sun in an oval line; and a line passing from one end of that oval to the other is called, in astronomical language, the line of the Apzides. Now it has been found that this line rises at a certain angle from what is called the line of the equinoxes, and proceeds in its own direction in a given ratio, so accu-

rate and constant that in 25,000 years it would perform revolution, and meet the equinox again. But La Place having demonstrated that this line proceeds a certain distance in a given time, has calculated the procession of this line from the line of the equinoxes, and found it to amount to such a number of degrees as proves that it has been proceeding about 5,800 years; exactly agreeing with the account found in the Mosaic record in the Word of God." The next matter that I have to refer to will be about the sword. Our Saviour says that he came to send a sword. The gospel which Jesus planted and established has been the occasion of war, but the cause of peace. But, for your satisfaction on this subject, and for the purpose of doing justice to myself, I shall read again out of the same book the remarks of this learned author. In the 264th page of his work:—"Mat., x. 34. 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword.' Startling expressions like this prove rather the reality and truth of scripture. Imposters, desirous of popularity and progress, would not have hazarded statements so likely to injure a present popularity, the only object of their efforts. Does it, however, contradict those passages that announce the Saviour as the Prince of Peace?—that declare one of the essential elements of his kingdom to be peace? We answer, No. The gospel may be the *occasion* of war, but in itself it is the cause of peace. Its holiness coming into collision with men's sins—its denunciations of iniquity falling on those that love it—its rebuke of the most plausible hypocrisy, and its recognition of the least heartfelt desire 'to, do justly and love mercy,'—its enshrining the least seed of truth, and indifference to the largest husk of ceremony,—are calculated, as soon as introduced into a fallen world, to rouse the resistance of wicked men. But such resistance is not the fruit of Christianity, but of corrupt human nature, hating and seeking to repel the approach of truth. Does not every attempt to enfranchise the enslaved, to vindicate the oppressed, create around it and in its train the same opposition? Have not the greatest benefactors of the world been obliged, as they dared, to despise the opposition because they loved the happiness of mankind? The world's scorn was aroused by their lofty contrast to the world's selfishness; and that scorn was an augury of their future success." The next will be my

reply to the objection started with regard to hating father and mother. In the same book, page 265:—"Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' This has been quoted as a specimen of a severe and cynic morality. It is plain that scripture invariably enjoins love from man to man, and still more love from children to parent. This runs through all revelation; of this there can be no reasonable doubt. It is, therefore, the right way to interpret the solitary, seemingly contradictory text, by the many plain and obvious ones. The word 'hate' is used in scripture comparatively with love. Thus it is stated in Gen. xxix. 31:—"When the Lord saw that Leah was hated,"—but this is explained in the preceding verse, (verse 39,)—"he loved Rachael more than Leah;"—"hated" in verse 31, is the 'less loved' in verse 30. So, 'If any man hate not his father,' &c., must mean, If any man love his father above me, serve, or sacrifice, or suffer for an earthly relationship more than for me." That again is replied to. Concerning the doctrine of justification by faith, and the verse quoted from the writings of Paul. "We know," says Paul, "we are justified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law." Man is justified as a sinner *by Christ* meritoriously, *by faith* instrumentally, and *by works* declaratively: and thus the objection is replied to, and the seeming discrepancy quite reconciled. But there is one little mistake which I have to correct before I proceed further just now, made by Mr. Bradlaugh last evening, respecting Dr. Livingstone. He allowed him to be a good man, and that he did what he has done and is doing because he is a good man. Livingstone is a good man because he is a Christian; because it is Christianity, and Christianity only, that produces the really genuine good man. Now who sent Dr. Livingstone as a missionary to South Africa?—The London Missionary Society, who supported him in his missionary career, who forwarded his endeavours at ascertaining the source of the Zambesi river, and its course and progress until it discharges itself into the straits of Mozambique. And who now still supports Dr. Livingstone but the London Missionary Society—and not only Dr. Livingstone, but scores besides, good men and true? Time would fail me to tell this evening of the noble men who

have laboured and laid down their lives on the missionary field for the elevation of mankind. Where are Carey, Marshman, and Ward, whose lives have been lately written by Dr. Marshman, one of the editors of the *Times* newspaper? Is there aught to say against such noble men as these? Where is Knipp and Burchell, through whom, in conjunction with Wilberforce, Brougham, and Buxton, the fetters were knocked off the wrists and ancles of the 800,000 slaves in the West India islands? Is not this a triumph for Christianity? 800,000 men liberated, and told to stand up as freemen; and presented each of them with a copy of the new testament by the British and Foreign Bible Society, pointing not only to the freedom of the body, but the higher and greater freedom of the soul, for he's the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides. He is the freeman whom God's truth emancipates; "for if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." With regard to the labours of our missionaries in foreign lands: as the missionary has gone forwards upon his work of philanthropy, before him has been the desert, behind him the garden of the Lord, and as he has walked his track has been marked like the appearance of spring, as she comes gaily tripping along the reviving earth: wherever she plants her foot the torpor, desolateness, dreariness, and bald sterility of winter departs: up spring the flowers, burst the blossoms, and the vernal buds and emerald-tinted blades of grass grow in grace, beauty, and fragrance: "the myrtle that shades the gay bower, the herbage that springs from the sod," in grand luxuriance rise. And wherever the foot of the missionary is planted on the foreign regions of the world. "Instead of the thorn has come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree, and it is to the Lord for a name and for an everlasting remembrance which shall not be cut off." The moral desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose, it has rejoiced abundantly with joy and singing. The cannibal has become a Christian, the savage a saint, and the wretched Hottentot holy and happy. But I come nearer to our own lovely island, the proudest gem of the ocean. Where are the Sabbath schools of England, Wales, and Scotland? Where are the Sabbath schools of Yorkshire? and who is it that supports these? Is it not a proof of Christianity that we have men and women, ladies and gentlemen, who each seventh

day return to their noble and philanthropic labours to educate the rising generation of our day, and preserve them from ever falling into crime, and, so far as their instrumentality extends, prevent them from becoming pests to society. I was reminded, in referring to this last evening, that these children are educated by priests, and by chapels. Am I a priest? Are the thousands of my Protestant brethren priests? Are we not the sworn enemies of priestcraft and tyranny, toiling with heart and brain, day by day, not only one day in, but frequently every day in, the seven, toiling to eradicate and extirpate these mischiefs from the world: on the one hand to drive popery, and on the other infidelity, away, and clear the world of these pestilences? I return again to my subject, and this time I have to place before you the philanthropic institutions of our land: but this would take up a volume, and I must confine myself to a limited circle, and that circle shall be the town of Halifax. Who gave you the people's park—was it not a Christian? (Groans.)

ICONOCLAST: (To the audience.) If you do not keep quiet I will leave the platform: if you think I am not capable of answering him, elect some one else to do it.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: Christians whose hands are always open, munificently distributing their wealth for the purpose of elevating their fellow-men within the environs of Halifax: and doing deeds which are as imperishable as time; which shall hand their names down to all time, and place them on the pedestal of immortal renown. Is not this a proof that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity? And nought can crush it.

"Firm as a rock his truth shall stand,
When rolling years have ceased to move."

The man who advocates truth is as coal, and can be as firm as the rock of Gibraltar. I refer again in the next place to the Christianity of the unpaid lay agents of our native land: do not these exhibit, I enquire furthermore, that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity. Every Sabbath day, and frequently on week days as well, there hies the humble local preacher, proceeding on his message of love—acting the part of the good Samaritan to the audiences who are visited by him. Again, to show that Christianity is calculated to

benefit humanity, I go back a century to the rise and the progress of these holy, these devoted, these self-denying, these laborious men, the Wesleys, and Whitfield, Howell, Harris, and Rowland, and Jones, in my native principality; and I ask, did not these men benefit humanity 100 years ago? And is not that benefit extending down to us at the present day? We must wait till "Doomsday" before we know how many men have been preserved from the gallows, and how many females have been preserved from all that is dreadful and harrowing to contemplate: we must wait till then before the great emblazonry shall flash on the eyes of an astonished globe, and we shall know what was accomplished through the efforts of these and their noble coadjutors on the fields of Methodism. The triumphs of Methodism in connection with humanity would take volumes to narrate. Christianity calculated to benefit humanity? Go and look at the miners of Cornwall when Wesley found them, and preached to them at the peril of his life: they were the most degraded and ignorant of the operatives in England—so brutish, that when a good man stood up to address them, they saluted him with brick-bats and stones, and torrents of abuse. But they persevered again and again; the same as our noble men at the siege of Sebastapol. Beaten back—they exclaimed "once more unto the breach, dear English friends," and they took it at last—stormed the citadel of immorality, and there were tens of thousands to witness the blessed effects of that peace and joy in believing—

"Which nothing earthly gives nor can destroy
The soul's calm sunshine and the heart-felt joy."

ICONOCLAST: I must first ask you, that whatever happens in the course of the evening's speeches, to preserve as much order as possible: whatever slur he unjustly casts, I have an ægis which shall catch, and a blade to return it; and I will ask my friend as to this demon of unbelief which frightens him so much, where would have been, if Harvey had not had this demon of unbelief within him, the knowledge of the circulation of the blood? I will ask him if Stephenson had not had the demon of unbelief in old, past, dried-up, musty things and customs, where would have been our railways at the present time? And I ask him if his own protestants, whom he so praises, had not had the demon of unbelief in

those papish fathers whom he quotes, where would be the Protestantism he is defending this evening? The demon of unbelief shall lift his wings and take a higher soar to-night than ever Christian believer dared to follow. My friend, in a speech worthy of the pulpit and not of the platform, has forgotten when praising Wilberforce, to tell you that Wilberforce in defiance of his bible, but in consciousness of the right of all humanity to freedom, helped to break the chains of the slave, which God in Exodus cast upon him, and which the Methodists preach at the present day in America, and hold slaves in right of. I will read in words which are a blot on the page of humanity, which Wilberforce, if he ever read, must have shuddered at, and which any man believing in truth and humanity, after hearing read will gladden himself that he has taken the wings of the demon of unbelief, and given them full vent to rise above his creed and slavish book. When he finds the bible so base as to say that a man being a slave, and the master having bought him may give him a wife to beget other slaves—it is in the 21st chapter of Exodus—that if the slave be bought for a term, then at the end of that term he shall go out, and leave the wife, whom his master has given him, and the children of his own flesh, all behind him in the service of the slave master. And that man being a man and saying I love my wife and children, then your God in this book has given it as a law, that for the penalty of loving his wife and children, he shall be a slave for ever. Nay more, that slave may be beaten so keenly and cleverly, that if he but continue alive to the fourth day, nay, even the third day, nay, if he live a day or two over the beating, the slave master shall escape punishment, because he has paid for him in good hard cash: the power of gold recognised in the kingdom of God. Good men free men from slavery, and then you pretend it follows from a belief in this book, which enslaves men body and mind. My friend has not dared to give the name of his authority for Hermas, Barnabas, and Company. Is that to be left to the last speech, because if it is, the audience will judge of the value of it: nay, if even given now it would be unfair, for, for three nights have I been calling for that authority, and it has not been produced. My friend has told you that which is simply and thoroughly untrue, when he told you that the Chinese and Hindoo chronologies are altogether false when they make

the earth older than 6,000 years—and he tells it you on the authority of whom? Dr. John Cumming, who quotes La Place. Dr. John Cumming might have been left out, and La Place taken by himself. However, we will take it, and then comes the question, is it true? First of all, it is not true: if La Place ever said so, he had not the same means of investigation that we have at the present day; and in the second place, La Place never did anything so stupid as make the age of the earth agree with the Mosaic cosmogony. Dr. Bennet Taylor, in his account of the age of the Delta of the Mississippi, says that it appears that the human race existed in the Delta, 57,000 years, and yet a little more than 5,000 or 6,000 years is the age of the universe according to the Mosaic account. When men pretend to gravely urge that 5,800 years or 6,000 years is the earth's age, they merely tell us either that they have not read, or have not thought, or having read and thought, they know too much to tell their fellows. Now my friend although again dared to it, thinks it better to tell of missionaries, then to defend the learned Origen, and defend Jesus who recommended that which Origen carried out. Am I to take it that with all his confidence in Christianity, that is a point he has not confidence in?—that, with all the firmness with which he stood, he feels that point is a weak one?—and that with all the epithets he heaps on the black-hearted atheist he feels that is a white spot he cannot blacken? Let us know what Jesus meant when he uttered the words which you have not dared to read and explain. Let us know what that high morality is which you excuse as weakness and over-caution in the powerful and learned Origen. Tell me of men who have freed slaves—tell me boldly and honestly they did it in defiance of the bible, against their bible, and because they knew at the best that it was for an ignorant people, and at an ignorant time, and is not meant for us now. My friend spoke of his granite rock, and tried to bring something in against the gross catalogue of crime I gave as resulting from Christianity, but by and by every one saw the crime, and none the granite, and they wondered where was the rock on which you stood so firm. My friend, too, boasted that he was going to sweep away popery on one side, and black-hearted atheism on the other. If he does, he will have to make a hole in the stream; he will have to do away with Clement of Rome, and Clement of Alexandria, and

good Polycarp, who had a dove which flew out of his breast, and whom, I say, seems altogether a fabulous personage. My friend has not yet explained my objections, which he says have been answered so often in relation to the genealogies. He has told you that hate does not mean hate in the bible: it means love a little less; and a *good deal less*, I should think. Then we are to be satisfied with faith and prayer, and concede to you—who yourself tell us you are not a priest, but a man the same as ourselves, we are to concede to you—the right of interpreting bible language in a way that you interpret no other book. Is that argument and logic? If that be the argument accepted by reasoning men, I at once bow my head. If truth be not truth, if hate be not hate, and nobleness be not nobleness, I give way. I have simply learned my own tongue, and God has not revealed to me the mystery of giving three meanings to a word which has only one. My friend has not told us why Jesus is a man sometimes and why he is a God sometimes, why this is an allegory and that a vision, why this is a reality and that a mystery. Do you honestly and fairly meet the catalogue I have summed up this evening? I charge you not to let this time pass, or I shall in future say, I met one who tried in vain to answer, but finding it too difficult, passed it by; who finding it unexplainable, did not care to deal with it; who finding God himself forsaken by himself, and knowing it to be inexplicable, did not dare to explain it; but we found him attacking black-hearted atheism and unbelief, which did not touch the objections at all. My friend, in telling you of the Chinese chronology, told you too much; for he told you he knew nothing whatever about it himself. Is he aware that the highest pretension for the Hebrew chronicles fall 2,000 years short of the foundation of the Egyptian empire? Let him read the chapters on chronology in Nott and Gliddon's "Types of Man"—let him see how little he has learned of that which the mist of the bible faith has prevented him from seeing—when, if he would study Chinese chronology, he would learn his error—for though the Chinese chronology is a matter on which we know but little, it is one of which we know something; and although I admit at once that the Chinese claim a much greater antiquity than I should be inclined to concede, because I cannot follow them in their calculations—yet, why should not the Chinese priests be as

true as ours, when they claim an existence for several hundred thousand years? Why say they can go no farther back than 1,500 years? and when there is a book of theirs existing with signs stamped on the page at least 3,000 years of age; and yet you attack that, the truth of which you have never examined or tested. Why, if what you say be true, why are you not prepared to contradict the statement made from Sir William Jones, when I told you that the peoples of Rome, Greece, and India existed, and had communication with each other, long prior to the Mosaic era or account? That was a quotation, which, if true, should have silenced you to-night. Let us deal with the matter, not as you would from the pulpit, with little children before you, but deal with it here, as you would with metal in a crucible, bringing out nothing but stern facts that the fire cannot destroy, and then "black-hearted atheism" will be mere words, which ignorant men will wonder at, and wise men treat with contempt. Let us have the matter fearlessly, honestly, and fully grappled with. And now for one more count in the indictment which you did not answer. What, as I was saying when I sat down before, is the sum of all Christianity?—faith, with or without works? My friend is obliged to admit that faith without works is bad, and although he finds it in the bible, he went on to say that man was saved by works declaratively and faith instrumentally, and so on, adding his own opinion in each case which wants explanation. Why, in giving an instance of the fig tree, do you tell us there should be some word there, there is not? Mark says the time for figs was not yet. Why do you say it was? Mark should know better than you. I do not believe God would come to a fig tree and look for figs which he knew were not there, and curse the tree because they were not there. According to Mark, the thing is incredible, not true, and not calculated to benefit man. It is not for you to add words to the text. If there are fig trees which bear figs all the year round, this was not one of them, or Mark would have told us so. And Mark says that it was not the time for figs to be there, and if so, it could not be one which bore fruit all the year round; and although great commentators have given us great bible commentaries, they are much the same kind of help to us, as the man who binds a handkerchief round your eyes, turns you three times round, and tells you to catch all you can. What

is the sum and substance of this? My friend drew attention to it when he told you of the curse and fall. What is the fall? God, all-wise and powerful, made man—made him with a desire to eat—made him with a desire to eat fruits, and commanded him not to eat of a certain tree he had given him the desire to eat of. Then, lest he should obey the command, he made a serpent to tempt him to break it, and man having fallen at the first temptation, God, all-wise and just, punishes man for doing that which he could not help doing, and in his wisdom and justice cursed the very ground, which had no more part than that it bore the tree God had placed upon it. God, all-merciful, damned all Adam's children, their children's children, and their grandchildren through all ages, to very eternity—those not being born, and having no choice when they should be born, damning them because he had created a tree, and placed it near a man, who, when tempted, broke the command given not to eat of it. But then God, "hypostatically" joined himself to the body of man, desirous of allowing man to escape the penalty: but although merciful, he does not pardon. Where no sin is committed, no pardon is needed; and the unborn child had no part in the offence committed. But God, "hypostatically" joined himself to man—(I confess my inability to understand it,)—God having joined himself to man, comes upon earth—comes—some sneer at the way in which he comes, but I have not attempted to put that before you as an objection, although it is one which could not have been grappled with and answered—God comes on earth as man, differing from man, with three sets of ancestry, none agreeing with the other, and then, being God, and unable to suffer, he bears our sufferings for us, which should never have come upon us, for a sin in which we had no part. God, to impart an air of authority to his mission, misquotes the prophets and withers the fig tree, as a warning to the Jews, which warning is not discovered till commentators find the act indefensible on any other ground—and having come to save man, when he finds his death hour about to approach, is agonised into a bloody sweat with fear of the very death he has predestined for himself; and on his cross, God himself, come to save the world, in his last moments utters words at which my friend must shudder,—words which would be blasphemy on other lips—words which my friend dare not answer,—which black-

hearted atheism could not have coined—which make God himself, in the anguish of dying, like a deluded enthusiast, cry, in bitter anguish and despair, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Will my friend answer me these things? Will he tell me if Jesus did not mean that a man was to hate his brother, what he meant when he said, those who had not swords were to sell their garments and buy them? What he meant when he said, “But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me?” Whether it be in a parable or not, tell me what it means. And my friend has not—and dare not—object to the arguments I urged against it being a parable. I told you there was a change of language; from speaking in the third person, Jesus changed to the first. The translators, in the middle of the sentence, had to stick in a paragraph mark to try to foist this into the parable. He has not ventured to tell you that I am untrue. He simply says it is a parable, but although put in the parable, he cannot tell its meaning there. Friends, is the gospel credible? I have pictured it before you as being incredible, and being incredible, cannot be calculated to benefit humanity. My friend tells you all men are good through their bible. Are you not arrogating to yourself the good men of the world in bitter consciousness that the great stream to which you referred has become so muddy that if you plunge into it, its very impurities will choke you? My friend speaks of a pestilence. Why, that pure stream which he traced for you brings a pestilence of wicked priests, whose names I gave—a pestilence of wicked emperors—a pestilence of wicked councils, cursing one another—a pestilence of wicked people, burning one another, because they could not agree to live and love one another—Christians boiling Pagans over slow fires, and dipping them into boiling oil, because they could not appreciate their work of love—a pestilence whose noxious vapours empoisoned the minds of all where they prevailed. You tell me of teaching children in Sabbath schools. Have you not gazed on the criminal statistics of the country? Have you found the fact that Sunday school teachers and taught have figured in them prominently? You have made it your study to find all the good done by Christians: how many atheists and infidels do you find in the criminal statistics? Although you say that atheism, like a very pestilence brought by the admission of unbelief, strikes among us, how

few of these atheists are there who are contained in your lists of criminals? Is it not the exceeding light they possess which enables them to stretch out their arms and stand up free and heaven-facing, instead of kneeling to an unknown altar and an unknown God, and uttering prayers which they have not the courage to work out for themselves. I remind you that you have to explain the genealogies, the three days and three nights, the flight into Egypt, the temptation, the sermon on the mount, where it speaks of cutting off the hand and plucking out the eye, of hell fire and the worm that dieth not, and take no thought for the morrow, which you have explained to mean, anxiety; but tell us of anxious lilies and anxious fowls of the air? Tell us of the meaning of the "hypostatical" union of God and man? Tell us what God meant on the cross? Show us the blackness of our heart in an argument, and not in words which have no meaning when uttered. To tell us of black hearts is to tell of that reflex you give from your own; but imagine not for us what you have in your own bosom. You who boast of your Wilberforces, tell me of the morality of your Davises. You, who tell me of your Livingstones, tell me who prosecuted Davis for libel, who charged him with immorality—one missionary against another—and which was right.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: The charge against Davis was proved to be wrong, and falls, therefore, to the ground. There is, consequently, an end to your argument. You tried to prove one bad, and have failed: signal success! We are always hearing of what infidelity has been doing and is doing—but I am aware it is in the future tense—as the auctioneer says, "Going, going, going to go." (A Voice: Sold.) Christianity, I affirm, is calculated to benefit humanity. I have proved it again and again, and again. I have proved it by repeated facts; and when I am passed away like my fathers, there will yet other mightier facts arise before the world to attest that Christianity, and Christianity alone, is calculated to benefit humanity. There is one argument patent and palpable to all; and it is only requisite to go back 1800 years and look at our ancestors, the painted Britons that stalked naked through our isle, and wandered timorously through the glades of our oak forests, where the Druidic priests kept them in servile bondage and superstition.

Contrast that savage of 1800 years ago, standing upon the spot where Halifax is now built, with such an audience as this, so noble, and intellectual, and grand. What has effected that change? Is it aught but Christianity? Is there any one thing that can come in before Christianity to lay claim to the triumph wrought in the island of Great Britain? What gave birth, and rise, and progress to the arts and sciences? What has made us, as a manufacturing nation, the mightiest and wealthiest of the globe? Picture before your mind's eye this evening the present happy situation of the West Riding, where Christianity prevails and is triumphant—God be thanked for it—with the condition of other nations and peoples lacking it. As to the stream which has come down for the past 1800 years, again I repeat, what have I to do with popes and councils? Did not I say that I was come to advocate, not the Christianity of bishops, not the Christianity of any sect or party, but the Christianity of the new testament—pure, simple, and unadulterated: “the bible, the whole bible, and nothing but the bible,” without the traditions and perversions of men. I am not here to defend any particular form of priestcraft—and again, I am forced to repeat it, I am opposed to it might and main, heart and soul. But there are other matters of very great importance this evening, which I must attend to—and that is to give you a quotation from Norton, whose authority has been allowed, after all, to be valid and conclusive by my opponent: remember that. He has stated now twice that I could not trace the history of Christianity further back than 200 years after the Christian era. I have already proved it, and it is there to be seen in type when the book shall come out; but I am forced to return to it. I have already proved it, but I am forced to lay proof on proof. “Papias,” Norton says, “I have already had occasion to mention it, he lived, it may be recollected, during the first quarter of the second century, and was acquainted, as he informs us, with many of the disciples of the apostles.” That would be the year A.D. 125; so you see there is 75 years gained for my argument. I am going to give from Norton, Papias' own words—here they are, and not from Paley or Lardner, remember! But I must defend myself with regard to these two authors. The reason I did not quote from them was simply this—because I had them not in my library, but I

should have been very proud to have added them to my list of books. I have used such documents and learned works as I found ready at hand, and when I produce Norton, I produce one of the best, if not the very best, on the subject. He gives us this quotation. I will give the very book containing the extract I am going to read: it is from Eusebius *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. iii., cap. 39: if not there, I have made a wrong quotation, and on Norton's authority lies the issue. "The Presbyter said, that Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, carefully wrote down all that he retained in memory of the actions or discourses of Christ: not, however, in order, for he was not himself a hearer or follower of the Lord, but afterwards, as I said, a companion of Peter, who taught in the manner best suited to the instruction of his hearers, without making a connected narrative of his discourses concerning the Lord. Such being the case, Mark committed no errors in thus writing some things from memory, for he made it his sole object not to omit anything which he had heard, and not to state anything falsely." Of Matthew, Papias says, "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able." Now I come to the challenge given me with regard to the quotations from Clement, from the epistles of Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and so on. I shall merely give short extracts, and show that my previous statements have been correct and truthful. "The first work we shall notice is the epistle of Clement, of Rome, written in the name of the church at Rome, where he was bishop, or presiding officer, or perhaps only a distinguished presbyter, to the church at Corinth, upon occasion of some dissensions which there prevailed. Only a single manuscript copy of this work is extant, at the end of the Alexandrine manuscript of the scriptures. This copy is considerably mutilated: in some passages the text is manifestly corrupt, and other passages have been suspected of being interpolations. The evidence for the genuineness of this epistle—that is, for the fact that the epistle, as now extant, was in the main written by Clement,—seems to be full and satisfactory." Now Irenæus, who lived about the year 125, or rather—I have made a mistake, and dates require accuracy—who was born about the year 125, and nearly survived the close of that century—facts are stubborn things, and are very plaguy;

they cause a little irritation, I dare say :—Irenæus, appealing to the doctrines of Clement, as opposed to those of the Gnostics, says that Clement had seen the apostles and had been connected with them, and so on. There is the testimony of a man who had seen the apostles, and had been connected with them : is not this sufficient evidence for the credibility of the four gospels ? For one valid reason you have for the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, the writings of Thucydides, or the “*Commentaries*” of Cæsar, you have a thousand for the four gospels—and you would demand more for the gospels than any other history : that appears rather strange to me. As history, it is history ; and if you believe one historical work because of a certain critical canon you have applied to it, and believe it because it comes up to that critical canon, that it is really a genuine work, it is marvelous that, when you have that critical canon, not only as good, but a hundred times better, you yet will not receive it. Here again you have the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, in the 339th page of Norton’s work, and then there is the *Shepherd of Hermas*, in the 340th page of Norton’s work. Norton says, “There is a work called ‘The *Shepherd of Hermas*,’ which has been regarded by some as the production of a fanatic, who imagined that he saw visions, or of an imposter pretending to have seen them. But I discern in the book no marks of fanaticism or imposture. It seems to me to belong to the same class of writings as ‘The *Tablet of Cebes*,’ ‘The *Vision concerning Pier’s Ploughman*,’ or, to take a more familiar example, Bunyan’s ‘*Pilgrim’s Progress*,’ or, more generally to the class of works of fiction, especially those written in the first person. The author, like Bunyan, describes himself as having witnessed a succession of visions, and also as having received various communications which he was commanded to publish. By some, both in ancient and modern times, the writer has been supposed to be the *Hermas* mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, ch. xvi., v. 14. This book, for a considerable period, obtained great favour and authority with many in ancient times. It is once quoted by Irenæus. Clement of Alexandria often quotes it as a book of high authority,” and so on. Then I come again to Irenæus. One of the earliest Christian writers, whose works have come down to us is Irenæus. The exact time of his

birth is uncertain, but he was born in the first half of the second century, about the year 125, and but just survived its close. Then there is Justin Martyr. In the 126th page of Norton, I find, "In ascending toward the apostolic age, after the fathers who have been mentioned in the last chapter, we come to Justin Martyr, who flourished about the year 150." So the argument about not being able to trace the history of Christianity further back than 200 years from Christ has been conclusively disposed of, and we have traced Christianity not only 1600 years back, but we have traced it to Origen, Tertullian, and Irenæus—to Hermas, Barnabas, and Polycarp—back to Ignatius, and back to the era, the age, the very time of the apostles. We have come to men who have left us their testimony that they had seen some of the apostles, had conversed with them, and had received the account from their lips of the things said and done by the Lord Jesus Christ. Now respecting the alleged discrepancies in holy scriptures. I referred—and it has never been replied to—to that celebrated German work written to prove that there never existed such a man as William Shakespeare. Applying the very same canon to the matter of William Shakespeare as is applied by Strauss and others to the matter in debate, the issue has been to prove that such a person as William Shakespeare never existed. With regard to William Shakespeare, Rowe says he was brought up to one occupation, Malone and Chalmers say that he was brought up to another occupation, and the present Lord Chancellor (Lord Campbell) has written a book agreeing with none of the others, but to show that he was brought up a lawyer's clerk. Here are discrepancies in the life of William Shakespeare—*ergo*, he never lived; discrepancies in the life of Jesus Christ—*ergo*, Jesus Christ never lived: both go overboard by the very same criterion. Then I might refer you to the life of Swift. What a subject for the same play of ingenuity would be the life of Swift: day and place of birth disputed; whether an Englishman or an Irishman; his connection with Stella and Vanessa; his alleged seduction of one, of both, of neither; his marriage affirmed and disputed, and still wholly unsettled; and a number of such other contradictions unsettled; and the eccentricities of his familiar character and conduct—with the thousandth of Dr. Strauss' assumptions as to whether Christ lived, it would reduce

Swift to as ideal a personage as his own Lemuel Gulliver. But we were told last evening that my friend must receive such evidence that he would not be able to be a free-will agent in the matter: it must come the same as the force comes which moves the heavenly bodies; it must come and drag him by the hair of his head, whether he will or no. What we demand is rational faith, and not unreasoning credulity. Have we, who believe, not common sense the same as they? sober reason as well as they? Have we not critical powers and sound judgment as well as they? Are they wise and we fools? It may be so assumed, but it cannot be proved. When I was told of the children in our Sabbath schools brought up by priests, I was thinking of that mighty William Shakespeare, when he wrote this blessed thought, "Over whose acres walked those blessed feet which fourteen hundred years ago, were nailed for our advantage on the bitter cross." Was he a child, and he believed that? Was Lord Bacon a child, and he believed that? Was Leibnitz a child—the many-folded scholar, and he believed that? Was Isaac Newton a child, who weighed, as it were, the stars in scales and the planets in a balance,—who measured their distances and calculated their velocities,—was he a child and believed that? Aye! the long list of glorious names attest that we are not unreasoning believers, but are intelligent Christians: that we sit down to the task, not hastily or discursively; that we have not come to it with pre-occupied notions—determined to see discrepancies whether they are there or not—determined to make discrepancies where the passages are as plain as daylight, and as clear as the noon-day sun. Have we not intelligence as you? Are we not able to judge right and wrong, proper and improper, reasonable and unreasonable, as well as you? We have judged it, reasoned it, argued it, and sifted it to the bottom. We were determined not to believe it unless it came with full conviction to our souls; but with hell flashing and heaven glancing before us, we dreaded the one, and longed for that paradise which shall more than compensate for the sneers of the infidel, as we look from the glorious balconies, and say—as the poor man who has escaped the dangers of shipwreck, says—"Thank God, I am saved." You gave us this evening a reference to the book of Genesis: with that I have not just now to deal; but I am prepared on any occasion to

meet you, or any of the school to which you belong, on that book. Having truth on my side, I am fearless. I have, like David, but a sling and a stone, but it shall be effectual to sink into the forehead of proud Goliath of falsehood, and cause it to fall to the ground, making the earth to tremble at his overthrow, and cut his head off with his own sword: with the sword of the spirit shall it be cut off. There is one remark I have to make, to test the logic of the matter in debate—for we can pretend to a small amount of logic after all—and it is this: it is for the objector to prove his own objections. It is a fact. And now I return to the matter about Christian—not heathen, not Jewish, but Christian—baptism. It is a very plain, simple matter—I have said it before—Christian baptism and the Lord's supper. I want them to be accounted for on the hypothesis that the gospels are not credible. *There* is a grave discrepancy on your part in this which requires clearing up, and it has not been done; but I know it cannot be done, and so, of course, I am demanding too much when I expect it to be done. I do not wish to be unfair. I wish to give you the fullest fair play, because, most happy should I deem myself if I could bring you to the same firm stand-point as myself; but I cannot believe what you said last night—that you are an atheist. In all fairness and candour, throughout the debate I have not said anything but what you have said first of all; and when I spoke of black-hearted atheists, I alluded not to you. I spoke of them as a fact in the history of humanity—for there are atheists, and atheists have been known and proved to have black hearts. What of one of the members of the French Convention, who in justifying their murders, wholesale murders and massacres—that French revolution when atheism for once mounted the throne of sovereign power—what did she do? She strewed around her broken images: *Iconoclastic* was her sad work—but they were the images God had made in his own image, whom she led by thousands to the guillotine—and what did one of the members of the Convention say in her justification? “People need not make such a bother about it: it is only the turning of the blood in one direction instead of another; instead of the blood running *in* the veins, we let it run *out*.” If that is not black-heartedness, I know not what is? Where are

Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, and the other incarnate band of fiends? They have been execrated and banned and branded by all good and true men; and Carlyle has done a noble work in giving us that solemn account of atheism, showing it to be a pestilence, not only detrimental, but destructive to humanity? Is this a religion? No, we are to have no religion: man with a religious nature is to have no religion: man has religiousness, but he is to have no religion: he is to have atheism and madness. And what has atheism done? I have drawn what it has done, and what I pray God it may never be permitted to do again—what it did in France, from 1791 till peace was again restored to that much distracted country.

ICONOCLAST: Will you oblige me with the book of Professor Norton?

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I have not asked for yours.

ICONOCLAST: Dr. Giles was asked for, and handed to you. I only want to convict my friend of falsehood; that is all. It is to be taken that my friend objects to allow me to see the book from which he quoted, and I will now quote from memory. The book my friend offers is not the one I want; but I will ask whether he has the book he quoted from the other night—the one with the label on the back—from which he quoted the Shepherd of Hermas and Barnabas?

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: No, it is not here. It was Dr. Lyman Beecher. (Sensation in the meeting.)

ICONOCLAST: I say it stated an untruth with regard to Papias. I have been trying to get this name for four nights, and have not got it until I have only fifteen minutes to demolish a fraud he has put forwards as evidence of Christianity. My friend heard me tell him that he used the very same language as was quoted by Lardner and Paley. I have read Beecher's work as well as himself, but he led me to believe it was in Norton, and I took up Norton last night, and was surprised—nay not surprised—that I did not find it, as what my friend read was not only not there, but I did not expect it there. He read of Papias, "a hearer of John"

I quoted all the passage of Papias, which I have here in the Greek and English translation. I told him we had nothing at all of what Papias wrote, but only Eusebius's quotation from him, and Eusebius said that his preface of his work showed that he was by no means a hearer of the original apostles. He did not dare to let me have the book; but he brings me something else which is not that which he read before, and he does not give that till the last quarter of an hour's speech, when I have not time to demolish that which he brought up. He has attempted, with a departure from candour—nay, with a want of candour I much deplore—he has attempted to say something of the Shepherd of Hermas, and something of Ignatius—as though Norton had quoted them as authoritative, and as evidence of the authorship of the gospels, when Norton himself admits that he does not refer to them for that purpose. But we heard nothing of this, as he did not read the words of Norton, which are as follows:—"The purpose of this note is to give some account of the 'Writings of the Apostolical Fathers,' so called, and on the one hand to explain why I have not referred to them as affording proof of the genuineness of the gospels." I am sorry, indeed, for my friend; sorry that he has so mistaken his opponent as to fancy my memory would not detect the difference between Paley and Norton; sorry he gave me no credit for being up to the art of this Christian evidence manufacture; sorry that he had so little thought as not to answer the absolute charge of forgery and falsehood I made in relation to these very writings; sorry he should tell you there is nothing fanatical in the Shepherd of Hermas, who saw a lady bathing in the Tiber, drew her out, and then found her to be the Christian church, which gave him good advice. I really hardly know which way I am to treat my friend. As long as he adhered to truth I could compliment him on his candour, although not on the strength of his argument; and when he gave us a little logic, though but a little, I endeavoured to deal with it as it was, and answer it to the best of my ability. But when he introduced black-hearted atheism, and denounced all my arguments as not worth a rotten nut shell, I felt that when my friend used abuse in the place of argument, and reticene in the place of candour, I felt that, dark as we are, their own hearts are not white and spotless as the driven snow. I think that we may

take it that the apostolic fathers have not gained much in the last speech, and won't appear again. Now my friend admits that there are discrepancies in the account of Jesus, and he does not try to answer them; but he argues that because the same discrepancies may be urged against William Shakespeare and Dean Swift, &c., therefore we are to believe in Jesus Christ. In the first place, it is not true. No accounts say that Shakespeare and Swift were born of no father; and in the second place, no account says his mother's husband had two fathers. William Shakespeare did not prophecy that he would be in the grave three days, and was not; so that the arguments are not alike: and if they were, are we to be damned for not believing in Shakespeare and Dean Swift? If so, there would be some analogy. But what is the whole argument of my friend who stands up to support the credibility of the gospels. Some parts are discrepancies, others are visions, others he dare not answer, and all are to be tried by the standard of William Shakespeare and Dean Swift, and that is all the defence he can make for them. The last thing a man should do, who tells you he has investigated this subject with "the fear of hell on one side and the hope of heaven on the other," is to read, not a quotation from Lyman Beecher, and consider his false reasoning as any answer, not in that manner to try to drink from the pure spring and give as truth the bitter falsehood he hands out, but to go to the spring itself. He takes Lyman Beecher's draughts from the spring, knowing how foul it is, and holds back his name to the last fifteen minutes to prevent his falsity being demonstrated. When you tell of Danton and Marat, tell me of the priests who crushed the people, who miseducated, misdeveloped, and made them the monsters they were; and do not pretend that before these men there was no crime; do not tell me of Danton and Marat, and yet cut acquaintance with Borgia and Constantine. Is your best defence of the new testament to take the 70,000 slain by Danton and Marat, and not account for the million I gave the other night, butchered in the name of Christianity, in that stream of blood which I traced down for 1800 years. You who tell me of Danton and Marat—you who tell me of black-hearted atheism—you who tell me of the demon of unbelief—learn first of all to give true evidence in support of your own revelation, learn next to apply the same mode of

dealing to your system as to mine, and tell me why you shrink with horror from your church by putting yourself in a small circle and saying mine is the true church, and all without are heretics? Tell me, nobly and truly, with what I am to deal. Do not pretend you have answered me. You have not told me why God deemed himself forsaken by himself—you have not given that text which shame prevents you reading—you have not dared to explain what Jesus meant when he said "But those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them bring hither and slay them before me;" and if you dare to do it now some men will say that you choose the last moment for your task, because you know I cannot answer you again, having no other speech. Five nights have passed, and I have shown your book to be a series of discrepancies, and you are compelled to admit it; shown you that Jesus manufactured prophecies, and you dare not deny it. You find an event which you cannot answer, and you say it was a dream or a vision, without telling us why you say so. Is this a defence of Christianity? Is this what I have to deal with? My time is nearly spent. I beg you here all to believe that in what I have offended your prejudices I have but uttered my own thoughts, candidly, fearlessly, and honestly before you. If what I have uttered be true you are bound to respect me, for truth and honesty should be respected amongst all men. If my words are error, try them, sift them—not as the church, with flaming fires and prison bars, but with your reason, which you tell me God has given you, and try if what I say be true or not: and as my friend quotes Emerson, so I conclude by saying with the poet Shelley:—

"Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river
Whose waves they have tainted with death:
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
And their swords, and their sceptres, I floating see,
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity."

Iconoclast sat down amidst loud and prolonged applause.

The Rev. T. D. MATTHIAS: Is Christianity calculated to benefit humanity? has been the subject of debate for the last three evenings: I hope you that are leaving will try to wait

a minute or two, I have a most important matter to bring before you.

ICONOCLAST : Hear him, and if wrong think, and we will answer bye and bye.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS : I am going to furnish another proof that Christianity is calculated to benefit humanity, and it will appear in a palpable form. There lives a gentleman now in Halifax, and I will refer to his name immediately. That gentleman, at the time I speak of, lived at Boringham, in Lincolnshire. He was conducting a revival meeting one evening, and as the meeting was proceeding, a young man entered, whose history he afterwards was made acquainted with, as I shall just now tell you. That young man was paying his addresses to a young lady, which young lady had rejected him. He went forthwith and bought two pistols, the one first of all to shoot her, and the other to blow his own brains out afterwards ; but on the road he heard singing from this chapel. He entered, and heard that which caused him to turn back from his fell purpose, because it is calculated to benefit humanity. It pierced his heart, and whilst there he acknowledged his sin, and made this confession. He presented the minister, now in Halifax, with the very two pistols which he had bought, and with which, had it not been for that meeting, a murder and a suicide would have been committed. [Here the Rev. Mr. Matthias held up the pair of pistols, and the cheers and laughter with which their appearance was greeted, prevented the remainder of the sentence being heard.] Two lives saved : murder and suicide obstructed : does not that benefit humanity ? I may tell you of another instance—of a sceptic who was travelling at one time, in the back wood settlements of America. Benighted, he sought a refuge in some cabin from the wolves and bears of the forest, and found it in the log hut of a lone and solitary woman, whose looks were ought but hospitable. The man of the house soon came in, and if the looks of the woman had terrified him before, the man seemed much more rough than his partner. He had a considerable amount of property about him, and dreaded sleep lest his property should be taken from him, and his life lost. What was his terror to see the old man place two pistols on the table ? He thought it was all

up with him. He was asked to go to bed, but this he dared not do; he said he would sit up. Well, then, sir, replied the old man, the dame and myself generally have a chapter of the bible and prayer together. He was not afraid of the pistols now: where the bible is—where Christianity is—there is “peace on earth and good will towards men.” The Christianity which I have stood up here to advocate, and have advocated thus far triumphantly—so far as any reasons brought against it—is the pure, simple, and unadulterated Christianity of the new testament. [A voice: put it to the vote.] Must I again repeat and reiterate that I did not come here to advocate the Christianity of a Borgia, the Medici, and Pope Julian, the atheist; but if you want to know or test the church I belong to, read Gibbon’s “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.” He will tell you of the Albigenses and Waldenses; and what will he tell you? Will he tell you aught detrimental to their character? His opinion is that the lives they lived, and the pious influence they exerted, was most true and genuine, and not spurious and anti-Christian; that they were calculated to benefit humanity. I must hasten to sum up the evidence, and I now proceed to show the state of the debate. Mr. Bradlaugh stated that I could not go further back than 200 years after Christ. Justin Martyr, as I have proved, flourished 150 years after Christ. Irenæus was born in the first half of the second century A.D. 125, and but just survived its close. This is conclusive proof that we can trace historical testimony to the credibility of the gospels further back than the commencement of the Christian era A.D. 200, and utterly demolishes his assertions. I refer for the authenticity of John’s gospel, to his own gospel, in his own words. “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.” Then with regard to the authenticity of the gospel of Luke, you find it in the first part of the Acts of the Apostles. Where is the proof of Origen’s forging the statements and objections of Celsus? That has not been shown. Where is the proof of the books and manuscripts of the opponents of Christianity were burnt by the Christian fathers? The assertion has been made without any proof. My evidence with regard to Christian—not Jewish baptism—has not been replied to and accounted for. The quotation from Sir William Jones is strong proof on my side. It analogises with the

principal features of gospel history, and is consequently taken from it. I have read an extract from Dr. Cumming, given from La Place, showing that the Chinese and Hindoo chronologies are utterly false. Are not the Chinese known to be one of the most mendacious nations in the world? Witness the other day the massacre of our troops on the Pehio, and 10,000 other instances could be found of the lying propensities of the Chinese nation. Where 's the proof of Polycarp's non-existence? He has not brought counter proof to my proof, respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the four gospels. I have shown them to be the productions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, from the authors I have quoted. He has not 'stated who, in his opinion, the authors were, and proved his assertions on that score. What I call for in vain, is proof! proof!! proof!!! My opponent stated that I could not prove the gospels to be written by Jews. Now it happens unfortunately for him, that the Greek of the four gospels is Hebraistic Greek, a vernacular form which prevailed at that time in Palestine, and ceased after the destruction of Jerusalem. The four gospels are full of Hebraistic words—a form of Greek distinctive to the Jewish writers of that period. And now this, the chiefest of all my arguments, with regard to the Jews, has not been replied to, not in one single sentence of the whole debate. It has been shoved on one side as unworthy of notice. Six million human beings ignored at one swoop,—all living testimonies! The demonstrable evidence given of the credibility of the four gospels by the Jewish nation and people, has not been replied to, simply because it cannot. If it could, there has been five evenings do it in. If it could, and if it had been possible, why am I to be told it shall be done at another time, and on another occasion? Why not now? And, now, in coming to the close of the retrospect of the whole debate, so far as the audience have been concerned, from the Monday to the present evening, I have to congratulate you on the whole upon the order which you have been able to maintain on both sides during the whole period. There has been fairness and calmness. We know a little soreness now and then will crop out; but we know the frailties and foibles of human nature too well to sum up that against you. A more orderly discussion has, I am told, never been conducted. I can venture to assert that I am gratified with the

issue. I will with fairness and candour say that my friend has, during the whole debate, conducted himself on the whole, as a man and a gentleman; and, if I inadvertently have spoken anything that had a tendency to hurt his feelings, I am sure I should feel very sorry for it, for I can afford to defend what I believe to be true, and love at the same time the man who maintains the opposite to my own belief. My time is expired. Farewell! I bid you all good night.

ICONOCLAST: I beg to move a vote of thanks to our chairman for his conduct in the chair, not only to-night, but during the preceding nights—except last night—in which he has done us the kindness to occupy the chair, and thank at the same time, my friend, Mr. Matthias, for the kind words in which he ended his last speech, and to say that I appreciate them, and that I am sorry if I wounded his feelings, when I only sought to do justice to my subject.

THE REV. T. D. MATTHIAS: I beg leave heartily, cordially, and gratefully to second the vote of thanks to our worthy and respected chairman. His influence I believe has tended greatly to preserve the peace and order of the meeting, and to our convenience. I heartily and cordially second the vote of thanks.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will not occupy at this late hour of the evening, more than one or two minutes of your time. I beg to thank you for the kind manner in which you have received this vote of thanks, and at the same time, I beg also to thank you for the conduct you have manifested throughout this discussion. You will be aware that neither on the one side nor on the other has all been said that might be said on the questions here discussed. I hope that help will have been given to enquiring minds, and that truth will be furthered. I need hardly inform you that my own opinions range on the side of Christianity.—“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” I have pleasure in saying that both the disputants have conducted the discussion with candour and firmness, and I do not remember ever listening to a discussion on this subject conducted throughout with such good temper and good

feeling. You must all have been pleased at the kind manner in which the debate was brought to a close, and the kind parting words uttered by both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Matthias. Let us all part in peace, good friends as we were before these meetings commenced.

ICONOCLAST: I beg to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Olive for presiding over us last evening. The copyright of this debate is vested in myself. As soon as possible it shall be printed and issued to you; and I trust we shall have as much interest and pleasure in perusing it, as you had in listening to the debate.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

MR. J. OLIVE: I beg leave to return you thanks for the compliment you have paid me; and in the name and on behalf of the Secularists of Halifax, I beg leave to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Matthias, for the gentlemanly and courteous manner in which he has treated his opponent and us.

The Meeting then separated.





